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Volunteers: The Heart of the Delaware 4-H Program

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UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

**COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION**

RELEVANCE 4-H Leaders have a **significant impact** on 4-H members. Volunteers often serve as mentors and guides, helping youth develop leadership skills (*Journal of Youth Development, 2020*).

Adult volunteers

are the  of all 4-H programming.



They go above and beyond to ensure 4-H youth **gain skills** and **enhance talents** to help them grow into confident and capable individuals.



Volunteer **engagement** leads to **win-win** outcomes: volunteers themselves **gain experience** and transferable skills, while youth benefit from **richer, more personal programming** (JYD, 2020).

Without these dedicated individuals **overseeing** club activities and **helping** with county and statewide events, there is a strong chance our program **would not be as successful**.



RESPONSE Delaware 4-H has over **300** volunteers. They work in various capacities at the local, **county, state and national level**, contributing to projects and events that **engage youth** in 4-H.

Volunteers:

- Help with local group projects and activities.
- Attend leadership and alumni meetings
- Chair committees
- Help out with county and statewide events.
- Chaperone national trips



Delaware 4-H volunteers **work hard**, and the Delaware 4-H **staff** wants to continue to give them **support** to help them **succeed**.



Yearly trainings are offered for new leaders and a **State Volunteer Leader Forum** to offer ideas to help leaders and members **succeed**.

RESULTS A **survey** of **51** Delaware 4-H leaders showed:

Gained skills to help improve their own leadership abilities.	96%
Believe they made a positive difference in the lives of youth.	94%
Believe 4-H members see them as a caring adult.	90%
Found ways to include youth with different abilities in activities.	88%
Feel they built positive relationships with youth and adults	79%
Feel it is fun to be a Delaware 4-H volunteer	77%



"It is nice watching 4-H members grow, learn and take what they learned into the community."



The results indicate overall Delaware 4-H leaders have positive experiences. Staff will use the results and input from volunteers to create more opportunities for collaboration and training to help volunteers continue to succeed.

RELEVANCE

4-H Leaders have a significant impact on 4-H members. Volunteers often serve as mentors and guides, helping youth develop leadership skills (Journal of Youth Development, 2020). These adult volunteers are the heart of all 4-H programming. They go above and beyond to ensure 4-H youth gain skills and enhance talents to help them grow into confident and capable individuals. Volunteer engagement leads to win-win outcomes: volunteers themselves gain experience and transferable skills, while youth benefit from richer, more personal programming (JYD, 2020). Without these dedicated individuals overseeing club activities and helping with county and statewide events, there is a strong chance our program would not be as successful.

RESPONSE

Delaware 4-H has over 300 volunteers. They work in various capacities at the local, county, state and national level, contributing to projects and events that engage youth in 4-H.

- Club volunteers help with local group projects and activities.
- Volunteers at the county level attend leadership and alumni meetings, chair committees, and help out with county events.
- Volunteers at the state level help out with the Delaware State Fair and other statewide events.
- Volunteers at the national level chaperone national trips, such as to the National 4-H Conference.

Delaware 4-H volunteers work hard, and the Delaware 4-H staff wants to continue to give them support to help them succeed. Yearly trainings are offered for new leaders and a State Volunteer Leader Forum to offer ideas to help leaders and members succeed. It is important to consistently check in with volunteers to make sure they are happy, heard, and have the tools needed to be a great 4-H leader.

RESULTS

A survey of 51 Delaware 4-H leaders showed:

- 96% gained skills to help improve their own leadership abilities.
- 94% believe they made a positive difference in Delaware 4-H youth's lives.
- 90% believe 4-H members see them as a caring adult.
- 88% of volunteers found ways to include youth with different abilities in 4-H activities.
- 79% feel they built positive relationships with youth and adults
- 77% feel it is fun to be a Delaware 4-H volunteer

The survey showed positive experiences. It also included open-ended questions like how has one been impacted by being a volunteer. One leader stated, "It is nice watching 4-H members grow, learn and take what they learned into the community." Another leader acknowledged, "Being a 4-H volunteer has given me the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children and their families." A third said, "Connections with other families is the most significant impact being a 4-H leader has had on me." The results indicate overall Delaware 4-H leaders have positive experiences. Staff will use the results and input from volunteers to create more opportunities for collaboration and training to help volunteers continue to succeed.

PUBLIC VALUE STATEMENT

Delaware 4-H volunteers help our program succeed. They teach, mentor, lead, support, and inspire—making sure 4-H members gain skills to last a lifetime.