

SUCCESS STORIES

UAF Cooperative Extension Service

4-H at-home camp kits provide youth with experiential learning opportunities

Issue

4-H camps held around the state of Alaska are a community effort to provide youth with experiential learning and give them a taste of 4-H. However, the camps have been on a two-year pause because of COVID. Eliminating these camp opportunities adds to the isolation families have experienced over the past year. Since the onset of the pandemic, Alaska has seen an increase in suicide among youth, and there may be additional unseen impacts (Alaska Kids Count, 2020).

Response

Alaska 4-H was a recipient of a Rasmuson Foundation grant in 2021 to deliver camp programming. The intent was to deliver the AK Experience Camp statewide to provide youth with experiential learning opportunities and a sense of community. In addition, we created the Alaska 4-H Summer camp at-home kits. The kits were offered to youth ages 5-18 throughout the state from June through September.

Fifty-five youth are participating in the at-home camp kits. Each month, campers receive a packet of supplies, along with the curriculum for experiential learning activities related to: Microgreen Magic, Plant Detectives, Potato Possibilities, and Summer Harvest. Recipients are asked to share stories about their camping experience.

In Kodiak, an additional 15 youth received a Kodiak-specific camp kit with activities that normally would be done in person. Kits included supplies needed to construct their own bow and arrow, make a paddle boat from craft sticks, build a s'more oven to cook their s'more ingredients, and bead an Alutiiq-style bracelet.

Results

Participants are located in Kodiak, Palmer, Fairbanks, Sitka and the Kenai Peninsula. These kits provided the experience



The Alutiiq Museum graciously provided supplies needed to bead an Alutiiq-style bracelet, found in the Kodiak-specific at-home camp.

of camp at home, building a sense of community throughout the state and offering a buffer against social isolation. Experiences are expected to align with Tufts University research on positive youth development showing that 4-Hers are twice as likely to participate in STEM activities during out-of-school time, and twice as likely to make healthier choices. Participant feedback so far shows the activities are fun and easy to do, and that campers gain valuable knowledge as a result of the at-home 4-H camp experience. One camper said, "The kits were a good way to bring the family together and learn about the environment around us. They were a lot of fun."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kate Schaberg
Program Assistant
Kodiak 4-H Program
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Cooperative Extension Service
klschaberg2@alaska.edu
907-485-1503

