

WALLOWA COUNTY 4-H JUNIOR OUTREACH PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

Due to the pandemic, many traditional 4-H activities were not able to happen this year. That includes club meetings, workshops, camps and summer activities. The Wallowa County 4-H Program decided to prepare packages that could be sent in the mail to younger members, and involved the older youth in the planning process. The packages were intended to make a meaningful connection with the youth and reinforce that they “belonged” to a great organization as well as provide them with some fun learning opportunities.

PROCEDURE

The planning process began with brainstorming sessions with interested adults and older youth. I met one-on-one with adult volunteers that helped form the framework of the project. Then, I held two zoom sessions with the older youth to get their input. The older youth would have been camp counselors this year, and this was a way to offer a leadership opportunity. We decided we wanted to design t-shirts for the members and include some 4-H SWAG, provide fun hands-on learning activities as well as promote healthy eating and physical activity.

Funding was provided through the Oregon 4-H Foundation, the Wallowa County Extension Service and the Wallowa County 4-H Association. Total cost of the program was approximately \$2500.

RESULTS

We were able to send 101 packages to Cloverbud and Junior 4-H members across the state! The packages included a 4-H t-shirt and bracelet, an activity booklet, a poem sheet, Food Hero recipe sheets, pirate ship kit, wooden boat, wooden airplane and an American Flag bead craft.

Older youth made videos demonstrating some of the activities in the packages, and encouraged members to share their experiences. The videos, stories and comments were shared on the Wallowa County 4-H Facebook page as well as several club pages.



“We got our boxes right before a camping trip. The kids had a blast building the planes and boats and using them at our campsite next to the river.”

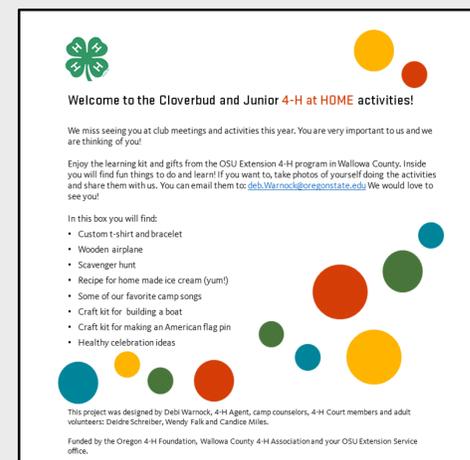
“It was very thoughtful and kind of you to send out the packages! My son LOVED getting a package addressed to him and the fun items inside!! I loved having something to keep him busy for a while! Thank you very much!”

DISCUSSION

This project involved the adult volunteers, older youth leaders, and reached a large number of younger members. Comments from parents reinforced that the youth received a much needed boost, and that they felt that someone cared about them. The activities provided helped keep members engaged in learning and while it may not have replaced the summer activities, it allowed them to get a taste of the traditional summer 4-H activities.

NEXT STEP

There is discussion of continuing a mail-out outreach project as long as in-person activities are restricted. We plan on sending additional mail-out packages that will keep youth engaged and foster that sense of belonging.



Member modeling his new shirt



Older youth packing boxes

