

## **4-H Youth Development ileadership Institute Program: Virginia State University**

### **Relevance:**

Youth development can be encompassed through many avenues for educational and outreach goals. The college setting in the summer time can serve as a way for youth to be engaged through hands-on youth development activities to support the advancement of social and cognitive development. Those could include: problem solving, conflict resolution, decision making, positive relationships with caring adults, civic engagement, STEM, and career orientation (Bialeschki, Conn, Hansen, Terzian, Thompson & Yohalem, 2011). According to Delgado (2002) a challenge within youth development programs are geared towards traditional educational experiences that often lacks interest and are not culturally relevant to help young people develop and grow. The opportunity to provide 4-H youth with a historically black college or university experience has open the eyes of youth to develop certain social and cognitive skills through adventure-oriented activities, creative, recreational, culturally specific, healthy living, and mentoring relationships on a campus setting (Delgado, 2002).

### **Response:**

The 4-H ileadership Institute formally known as the intermediate congress is designed for youth who are interested in becoming leaders in 4-H. The mission of 4-H ileadership institute is to provide non-competitive educational experiences to youth ages 11-13 and the adults who work with them, helping them to develop life skills, and leadership abilities to become contributing citizens in their communities. Participants learn by participating in hands on workshops, yoga sessions on healthy living, public speaking on topics, field trips to campus farm, citizenship and leadership speaking forums, networking/teambuilding and etiquette dining activities. Program objectives were to (1) provide a high quality educational experience for 4-H youth ages 11-13, (2) promote 4-H as a major statewide educational youth program, (3) to provide educational, recreational and social experiences for youth that would not normally be available at the unit or district level, (4) enhance skill development through 4-H ileadership institute activities including health rocks, 4-H yoga, drone technology, and food challenges; (5) promote an understanding of the value of diversity among participants, (6) and enhance youth delegates sense of personal and social responsibility through an environment that fosters independence, accountability, decision-making and time management.

### **Results:**

Youth participants took part in the 4-H ileadership institute at Virginia State University learning leadership, citizenship, and healthy living practices in July 2018. Approximately 28 delegates and 8 teen counselors that participated. 90% of youth delegates responded that the 4-H ileadership institute met their expectations “a lot better than they thought” and “better than they thought.” Youth also participated in 4-H oral group presentations on various topics covered including: Food Challenge, Health Rocks, Makey Makey, and Drones. Another exciting component to the program was the implementation of 4-H Yoga. With youth ages from 11-13, 80% mentioned yoga helps them relax, while many youth mentioning they have not done yoga at home. “This experience helped me make friends and learn how to be a leader,” stated 4-H

ileadership delegate. Please see the youth in action here from the 4-H ileadership Institute:  
<https://www.facebook.com/753703193/posts/10156498815528194/>

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**References:**

Bialeschki, D., Conn, M., Hansen, K., Terzian, M., Thompson, N., Yohalem, N. (2011). The impact of youth development programs on student academic achievement. *National Collaboration for Youth*. Retrieved from <http://www.jwbpinellas.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Youth-Development-Programs-and-Academic-Success.pdf>

Delgado, M. (2002). *New Frontiers for Youth Development in the Twenty-First Century: Revitalizing and Broadening Youth Development*. New York: Columbia University Press.