

Impact

Sharing the difference CSU Extension makes in people's lives and their communities.

4-H Contests Contribute to Life Skill Development

4-H contests are a significant vehicle for positive youth development in the young people who engage in these activities. The Fashion Revue contest had the greatest influence on positive youth development of all the contests evaluated in this study.

Issue

The 4-H program's overall mission is to help young people become positive, contributing members of society as they reach adulthood. A variety of the activities that 4-H members engage in have been documented to support the overall goal of positive youth development.

Extension's Response

One of the activities that the 4-H Youth Development program is known for is contests. In order to demonstrate the positive effect that 4-H contests have on the lives of young people data were collected in 2009 at the following state 4-H contests:

- Creative Cooks
- State 4-H Conference (mainly livestock and horse contests)
- Demonstration contest
- State Dog Show
- Fashion Revue
- Performing Arts contest
- Rocket Fly Day
- State Shooting Sports competition

A total of 387 individual surveys were collected at these state level contests. Data were analyzed by contest, by age level of participants, and with all contests together as one experimental group.

The change in behavior-related questions posed to this audience were:

Please tell us how often you did these things before your 4-H experience and how often you do them now.

- I finish what I start
- I can solve problems
- I tell others what I know
- I make good choices
- I use time wisely
- I have more confidence in myself

The four possible responses for each question were:

- Almost Never
- Not Usually
- Usually
- Almost Always



The Bottom Line

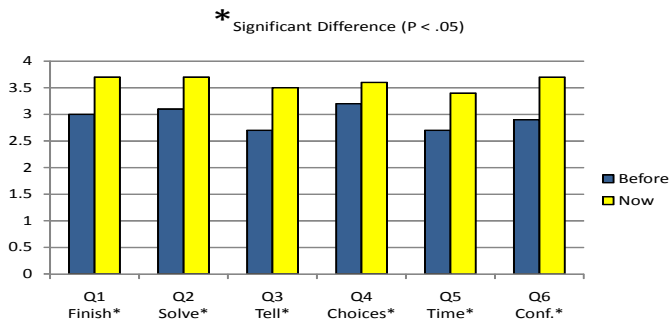
As we explore new and cutting edge ways to deliver the 4-H program, many of the "tried and true" methods used for many years are still very effective. Every contest in this study supported the positive youth development mission of 4-H. The 4-H Youth Development program has been in existence for more than 100 years. People sometimes perceive 4-H contests as an outdated mode of teaching life skills.

The take home message might be that a contest like Fashion Revue (that has been conducted for more than 50 years) had the greatest positive influence on the research questions involved in this study and is still relevant today.

Impact

There was a significant positive difference between pre- and post-scores when all the contests were analyzed separately and also when grouped together as one experimental treatment group. Results of the pre-and post-responses are shown on the following graph.

Mean Responses for All Contests



While all mean responses show a significant difference between pre- and post-measures, the two questions with the greatest change between pre- and post-mean scores were Q3 – I tell others what I know, and Q6 – I have more confidence in myself.

Results from individual contests are not shown in this report because those results for each contest are very similar to the overall results shown above.

Change in Mean Scores Pre- and Post-Fashion Revue vs. Other Contests

	Fashion Revue			All Other Contests		
	Pre	Post	Chg	Pre	Post	Chg
Q1 Finish	2.8	3.8	+ 1.0	3.1	3.7	+ .6
Q2 Solve	2.9	3.8	+ .9	3.1	3.6	+ .5
Q3 Tell	2.4	3.7	+1.3	2.7	3.5	+ .8
Q4 Choices	3.0	3.8	+ .8	3.2	3.6	+ .4
Q5 Time	2.4	3.5	+1.1	2.7	3.4	+ .7
Q6 Confidence	2.5	3.8	+1.3	2.9	3.6	+ .7

The greatest difference in pre- and post-mean scores was clearly in the Fashion Revue.

“I did a lot with the Pueblo County and state 4-H Fashion Revue. I was also on the 2009 State 4-H Officer Team.

My (pageant) directors were really surprised at how well I interview and I attribute it to all those interviews people made me do for 4-H awards, 4-H scholarships, running for different offices in 4-H. I definitely feel more prepared because of 4-H.”

-Jessica Hartman

Miss Colorado USA 2010

Pueblo County 4-H

For more information contact

Jeff Goodwin
 State 4-H Program Leader
 (970) 491-1152
jeff.goodwin@colostate.edu
www.colorado4h.org