

Task 8: Findings

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4-H is an agency that has been around and affecting millions of lives for many decades. Mentorship, training, and support are provided for all participants within the nationwide program. The evaluation on the Chesapeake 4-H Jr. Summer Camp CIT/Counselor training program is no exception. Time and effort is exerted to make sure that the adolescents are prepared for their roles as CITs/Counselors. The evaluation focused on how effective the training program was at teaching the adolescents the necessary basic information about 4-H in general, but also leadership skills to assist the adolescents in the completion of their jobs.

Results

During the duration of the evaluation process for the Chesapeake 4-H Jr. Summer Camp information was collected through an observation of a training session for the CIT/Counselors for the 2017 summer, an interview with the overall Chesapeake 4-H Program Director, and an interview with a 2017 Collegiate Summer Staff member. While conducting the observation, the adolescents involved in the training as well as watching the program director interact with the adolescents provided an immense amount of information about how the training works as well as how the trainings are regularly run. The two interview's both gave valuable information to the specifics of how training impacts their roles' in addition to their personal beliefs on how training affects the adolescents'. Even though the interviews provided more bias information, weeding out the bias was easy to strip down to get to the straight factual information.

The observation of the adolescent's during their training session provided interesting and copious amount of information. The training initially started out by appearing that the whole night was going to be a train wreck. Approximately 75% of the

adolescents in the room had previously already been either CITs or counselor, but every adolescent in the room was acting like a ten-year-old child playing out on the playground. The program director struggled to grasp their attention and begin the training. Once the adolescent's finally settled did the real interesting things happen. As soon as all the adolescent trainees finally realized that the program director was not their to play their games, it was like a switch was magically switched and they were mature and focused. Throughout the entire two hours of training, the program director assigned multiple tasks involving; team building, critical thinking, and games/songs.

During the team building activities, in many groups there was a clear defined "leader" of the group. In those cases one single adolescent stepped up and took charge of the group as well as the activity at hand until the activity was completed. Based on observations, those adolescent's that stepped up to be the leader were adolescents who had already previously been through the CIT/Counselor training. In the other groups that there wasn't one leader who stepped up displayed two other options. In groups where there were multiple return adolescents, all the returner adolescents created their own leadership team and collectively led the group. The third group dynamic was that with solely brand new trainees, first time counselors, or just relatively quiet trainees in general no one led the group at all: In those cases each group member worked on their own, which didn't work out successfully, but not for lack of training from the group members.

In instances where an the program director asked any of the adolescents to answer a question or lead a song, many of the same outgoing and older/returner adolescent trainees volunteered themselves to complete those tasks. The newer and younger adolescent trainees appeared too afraid or not confident enough to stand up and volunteer

themselves to complete the requested tasks. Even when encouraged by both the program director and returning trainees, the newer and younger adolescents were still fearful, declining the invitation.

In addition to the observation of the training, the evaluation on the Chesapeake 4-H included two interviews: One interview with the Chesapeake 4-H program director as well as another interview with a Collegiate Summer Staff member for the 2017 summer. During the interview with the Program Director she emphasized that the curriculum that is being taught to the adolescents in training follows a specific set of guidelines laid out in the accreditation. The accredited curriculum is taught through PowerPoint, group discussions, and leadership oriented tasks. The education of the adolescents is thoroughly conducted in both a classroom setting as well as in a practicum setting. At the end of each year of camp both the adolescents in training as well as the parents' of the campers for that given year are given an evaluation. Comments made during those evaluations are taken into consideration and adjusted accordingly.

In the interview with the Collegiate Staff member, the staff member emphasized about how trainings had affected her later adolescent/young adult life as well as her role and acquiring her role as a Collegiate Staff member. This member in particular had held multiple other leadership roles both in school and out in her community prior to receiving the role as a CIT and Counselor. After her role as a CIT/Counselor into her first year in college she participated in many more leadership roles at her university, back in her hometown, and in the 4-H program prior to her hire as a Collegiate Staff member. The staff member attributes her years during her 4-H training to how she has become the leader she is today. The 4-H CIT/Counselor training program not only teaches the

information pertaining solely about the 4-H program, but about becoming a great leader and skills usable in many aspects in life.

Conclusions

Based on the results found within the evaluation of the Chesapeake 4-H Jr. Summer Program, in terms of how effective the CIT/Counseling training is at preparing the adolescents for their roles as CITs and Counselors as well as for their everyday lives, the training adequately prepares the adolescents for both their roles both in and out of the 4-H program. The 4-H program has a set of accredited guidelines of information that they must follow, but the trainings also focus on leadership skills and critical thinking which are two skills that are used in everyday life. While many of the adolescents currently had previously been in other leadership positions a decent portion of them had not until after their time spent in the 4-H program and the programs CIT/Counselor trainings. That being said, the 4-H CIT/Counselor trainings have affected adolescents' lives both inside of the 4-H program and in their everyday lives outside of the program.

Implications

Based on the findings collected throughout the evaluation process the implications stemming from the evaluation are all positive in nature. Data collected throughout the evaluation showed that the training program was working effectively to teach the adolescents leadership skills usable inside of the 4-H program as well as in their everyday lives. The data found from the evaluation impacts the program in a positive manner. While the 4-H program as a whole goes through their own evaluations each year as well as their reaccreditation processes, the evaluation I conducted gives the program director affirmation that the work she puts into the training program is working efficiently. This

is proved through the adolescents' successful completion of the training leadership skills and tasks. In addition to being involved previously and currently participating in leadership roles. The findings acquired during the evaluation show a positive impact on both on program and the service (CIT/Counselor training) that 4-H offers.

Recommendations

In the case of the 4-H Jr. Summer Camp for the city of Chesapeake, the program runs into problems from time to time like any agency does, but in terms of the effectiveness of the CIT/Counselor training program, the training of the adolescents runs efficiently and effectively. The adolescents are given the opportunity to learn an immense amount of information about the 4-H program, what is required in the role of CIT/Counselor, and leadership skills. After evaluating the 4-H training program, all the resources and information is adequately available, but not as many requirements or checkpoints are given out to those adolescents in order to track their progress throughout the training process. Adolescents have enough issues paying attention in school and keeping track of all of their other extracurricular activities. To add 24 hours of information and learned skills at adolescents already in information or sensory overload is a lot. My recommendation to the program would be to add some sort of testing system into the curriculum. By adding this into the training, the test would track to see if the adolescents are truly paying attention and absorbing the large amounts of information being given to them. Especially in the case of first time CITs or Counselors, those adolescents have never had any real world application of the skills and necessary information it takes in completing the job. For example, to give adolescent trainees a written exam at the end of their 24 hours of training covering a wide range of general 4-H

knowledge as well as example scenarios they could potentially have to deal with as CITs/Counselors could be beneficial to raising the standard of “hired” CITs/Counselors.

Goals and Objectives

Goal: Propose addition of written test to 4-H CIT/Counselor training curriculum by the end of the 4-H Summer Camp season 2017.

Objectives:

- Discuss potential positives and negatives of adding a written portion to CIT/Counselor to the current city of Chesapeake 4-H Program Director by the end of June 2017.
- Cite examples of current research on test taking and retaining information statistics by the end of July 2017.
- Identify three other organizations that include a written portion in their volunteer/staff training curriculum by the end of August 2017.

Goal: Develop an alternative curriculum plan for the 4-H CIT/Counselor training by increasing the amount of training hours to 40 hours by December 2017.

Objectives:

- Analyze repeat problems identified within the CIT/Counselor and camper evaluations; determine what information/tasks could be added to the curriculum to address these issues September 2017.
- Evaluate current curriculum lay out by training session and rearrange/add curriculum based on a 40-hour training regiment instead of a 24-hour regiment by October 2017.

- Predict positives and negatives for increasing the curriculum to 40 hours and how that will affect the CITs/Counselors by November 2017.

Support of Findings

Not only were the findings from this evaluation conclusive with my own suspicions, but also are also supported by literature that focuses on adolescents in extracurricular activities and how it affects their lives. The main focus of the 4-H program is learning by doing and mentorship from directors as well as other staff. This evaluation showed that the adolescents involved in the 4-H Jr. Summer Camp program or CIT/Counselor training gave way to other leadership roles in other more aspects than just leadership roles with 4-H. “Recent studies have shown that adolescents who participate in extracurricular activities have greater opportunities to build their leadership skills through positive, active, and constant support from adults in a mentoring culture ” (Dyk, Hancock, & Jones, 2012). With the help of 4-H’s mentoring staff, the adolescents involved in the CIT/Counselor training are given ample information and taught skills to help them in more than just 4-H leadership positions. In another study conducted by Kinsey, he points out that, “There is value in the 4-H experiences that youth are participating in, such as increased leadership and personal development skills” (2013). 4-H is an enriching program that focuses not only on 4-H program information but life long skills that help set up the adolescents within the program for a successful life with appropriate skills in an array of different life aspects. The evaluation conducted on the Chesapeake 4-H Jr. Summer Camp CIT/Counselor training program proved to be considered an ‘effective’ training program. The adolescents within the training program are learning skills and information that will assist them in not only their 4-H careers, but

for the rest of their lives.

References

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