

**Missouri 4-H Homegrown Community Leadership
Program (MOHOCOLA)
Project Summaries – Year 2 (2011)**

*Engaging Youth, Serving Community (EYSC) - A National 4-H Youth in Governance Demonstration Project
Funded by National 4-H Council and USDA Rural Youth Development (National Institute of Food & Agriculture)
Supported by University of Missouri Extension*

Barton County

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On Nov. 1, Barton County EYSC brought youth and adults from the community together for a youth-led community issue forum on the topic of poverty. Twenty-eight participants, including a state legislator and county commissioner, shared ideas and insights to help guide the EYSC core team's future work on impacting poverty. One outcome of the forum was narrowing the focus of the project to impact children, the elderly, and the disabled, groups that are the most vulnerable to poverty.



Barton County 4-H partnered with various community organizations and handed out free school supplies to youth K-12 grade. This project was a community project that reached out to families that were in need of assistance to prepare for school. The Good Samaritan Thrift shop and Economic Security participants, along with any community families in need, had the opportunity to sign up in advance. The booth offered 4-H information, food and nutrition information, and the opportunity to put their name in a drawing for backpacks at the end of the day. The three back packs were filled with basic school supplies for ages 5-7, 8-13 and 14 and over. The supplies in the backpacks were provided by Barton County 4-H Council. The time spent with the project was an afternoon of fun and learning more about the many organizations that work together to serve 265 youth and adults.



Last fall, the community of Lamar was among thirty-eight communities and honored at the Missouri Community Betterment (MCB) conference in Jefferson City. Barton County EYSC youth members created and submitted a 10-page portfolio of the team's activities for the MCB program judges. The core team nominated EYSC youth, Lynzee Flores, to represent Lamar at the MCB annual conference, where she received a Leadership Award for her leadership skills and active participation in community betterment projects. Lamar received 1st place in its population category for the MCB Glenn Smith Youth Group of the Year Award and 3rd place in its category for the Gene Speichinger Community of the Year Award.

Dade County

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Dade County EYSC involved youth and adults together in the construction of raised beds for a community garden. The garden site is next door to the Dade County Health Department, which was secured through the project's partnership with local health officials. All of the garden beds were planted and harvested over the summer months by core team members, school-age youth, family members, and community volunteers.

Research has shown when children eat a more nutritious diet they achieve higher levels of learning. Fewer hungry children may lead to higher test scores in school. In order to help sustain the project and provide food to families, the Dade County EYSC core team prepared ten garden beds for members of the community to adopt. All ten gardens were adopted, planted, and tended. Despite battling excessive heat, the garden furnished 13 different families with over 96 pounds of fresh vegetables during the season. Two of the core members from FFA were responsible for taking care of the 4-H/FFA bed over the summer. The community agreed that they look forward to the next growing season. Community

members are already thinking about building more beds, not only on the current plot of land, but in other locations in Greenfield.



In Sept. 2011, Dade County EYSC participated in a videoconference and hosted a site visit by EYSC state core team members and program officer JoAnne Leatherman from National 4-H Council. Core team members learned how to map the community capitals that their project efforts have built, and identified an increase in youth leadership skills as FFA students collaborated with

4-H on the community garden project. Core team members also identified families and volunteers beginning to change eating habits and parents starting to learn better meal planning and preparation as initial impacts of the project. Finally, the primarily adult heavy County Extension Council has amended bylaws to allow youth and young adults to serve on council and have an active voice in the community.

In 2011, youth team members continued the Brown Bag Buddy Program (BBBP), a weekend backpack program addressing hunger among school-age children in the community. All but one of the youth core team members graduated, but new students were attracted to keep the program going. Each Friday, brown bags were filled with nutritious ready-to-eat food and distributed to needy children. The core team packed the bags and left them in the teacher work room where they gather the bags and discreetly place them in student backpacks while the child is at lunch or recess. In the second year of the project, 44 elementary students received weekly food supplements. Community donations of \$3,250 (and a \$100 monthly pledge for 2012) were received from the Dade County Community Foundation, area churches, and private individuals.

Oregon County

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Youth Teaching Youth (YTY) is a program that was piloted in 2011 by the Oregon core team. YTY offered free tutoring and mentoring to students K-6 by high school students (A+ program mentors) who excel academically and are of good character. YTY is a unique program because high school students are involved in the planning and implementation of the program. The goal of the program is to assist elementary students academically while fostering caring and mentoring relationships between the older and younger youth involved. Academic achievement with emphasis on tutoring and mentoring is the issue chosen by the community core team.



In 2011, 13 youth and 7 adults were engaged from the two communities of Alton and Thayer. The core team hopes to recruit further youth by sending out flyers and targeting grades K-6 to be tutored. The community's adult network will help provoke local stakeholders to become involved. At a minimum, the core team would like to see 12 adults involved both as stakeholders and community members.

The core team organized and led two town hall meetings, and participated in an interactive video conference with other EYSC sites, held several planning meetings, and budgeted for and purchased educational materials to launch the program. The core team worked with Alton & Thayer schools to acquire their support and use of facilities. Youth created flyers distributed to K-6 students, informing them and their families of the free tutoring/mentoring program as well as a flyer for high school students to join as volunteers.

YTY provides a safe and caring environment in which older youth, under the guidance of adult staff, assist younger students in homework or specifically addressing areas of math, science, reading, etc. The program alternates between periods of tutoring and mentoring. The mentoring involves educational and team-building games promoting interaction between older and younger youth. It also includes creating and building crafts to spark imaginations and instill creativity in younger students. The program is poised impact as many as 750 elementary age youth in both Thayer and Alton schools and potentially 40 to 50 high school students that volunteer.

In May 2011, the Oregon County core team participated in the community capitals mapping activity. Based on the activity, the core team was able to identify several impacts the YTY program has made on the community. Teen mentors note gains they have made in leadership skills, and see early signs of how younger students are gaining relationships and self-esteem to support success in school. As friendships between older and younger students develop, teens become more accountable to children as role models. In the words of the teens, YTY has caused the community to begin to view youth as academic achievers, rather than trouble makers.

This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under Agreement No. #2008-45201-04715, awarded by the National 4-H Council and supported by University of Missouri Extension. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.