

# impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

## 4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential

### AT A GLANCE

Research shows that the UI Extension 4-H Youth Development program can have a profound impact on youth by providing the Positive Youth Development context for helping youth Thrive.

### The Situation

Considerable research in Positive Youth Development (PYD) has determined the context and environment needed to put youth on a path to reaching their full potential or in other words Thrive. University of Idaho Extension 4-H Youth Development programs are intentional in their design and implementation to offer high quality programs with key elements that make a positive impact on participants.

### Our Response

4-H's Know Your Government Conference (KYG) gives youth the opportunity to explore their Sparks, experience a sense of belonging, and benefit from supportive relationships from adults and peers. Research tells us that these factors drive the 4-H Thriving Model and outcomes like social competence, positive academic attitude, personal responsibility, personal standards, contribution and connection with others. The KYG conference provides the experience to build these outcomes in youth. This year 159 youth in grades 8 to 11 participated from 25 of 44 counties and one of the three Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Programs in Idaho. That was a growth of 39 youth over the previous year.



Delegates tour the state capitol after completing a hearing on a Bill presented by a peer for the mock legislative session.

The KYG conference is planned and implemented using positive youth development principles such as youth-adult partnerships, caring adults and challenging youth in supportive ways that teaches them that they can learn, grow and get better through effort. The conference also encourages teens to challenge themselves to grow in leadership and contribution by serving on the steering committee. Like many 4-H activities, youth are expected to practice public speaking during the mock trial and the mock legislative session. Youth committee members help facilitate the mock trials and legislative hearings as well as lead their peers through activities in the daily schedule. Youth had the opportunity to visit with elected officials at the KYG President's Day breakfast where the state Superintendent of Public Instruction addressed the conference.

## Program Outcomes

Twenty-two dedicated volunteers and nine UI Extension 4-H professionals spent over 45 hours working with youth. What happens in 4-H programs and how they are planned and led, makes a huge impact on youth. The 4-H Thriving Model evaluation instrument identifies and predicts specific factors influencing program quality. Data collected from 89 of the 159 youth measured the extent to which youth experienced Sparks, belonging and developmental relationships with adults and peers during the program. The data shows that youth experienced a high-quality program with an overall Developmental Context score of 5.83 on a rating scale of one to seven. Youth indicated a high level of the following factors which are significant predictors of youth thriving.

Sparks = 5.64 — Belonging = 6.12 — Caring Adults = 5.65 — Challenge Growth = 5.96 — Youth-Adult Partnership = 5.96 — Developmental Relationships = 5.79.

Youth provided the following statements in response to their experience.

“One of the people who helped me build my spark was a 4th year youth. I want to be like her. I want to be the strong leader she is.”

“They’ve really taught me to step out of my comfort zone, meet new people and try things that I might not feel comfortable doing.”

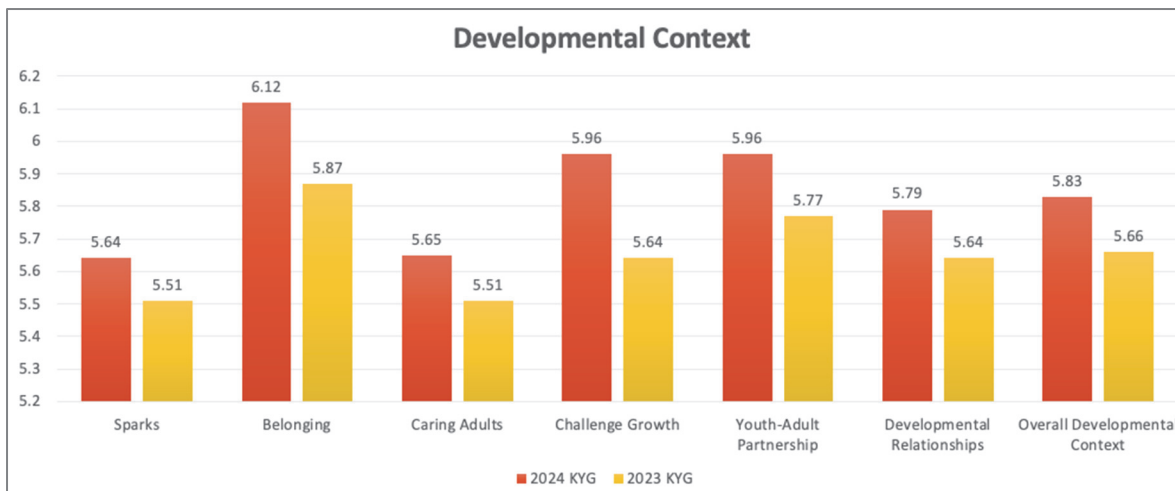
“It’s a great way to learn more about our government, not just at the judicial and legislative, but also at the local level. And it really encourages kids to take an interest in our country.”

## The Future

The planning team will continue to work to increase conference attendance and improve overall quality.

## Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Over \$15,000 came from sponsors including: Idaho Farm Bureau, Attorney’s for Civic Education (ACE), Valley Wide Cooperative and James & Autumn Craig.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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7-24-mknutz-kyg-conference • 4/24