Sussex County 4-H Afterschool

**Issue:**
The need for after-school programs is a critical issue in Delaware, especially in low income communities with populations of at-risk youth. Parents and/or grandparents can’t afford even modest charges for after-school enrichment programs, struggle with the completion of daily homework assignments, have limited transportation and limited access to quality enrichment programs for their children. Without these services, low-income families are unable to support their children academically and developmentally diminishing their potential future success as compared to more affluent families.

**What’s been done?**
4-H after-school has met these needs by establishing three quality after-school programs located in Delaware State Housing Authority Sites in Sussex County, which serve some of the lowest income youth. On any given day approximately 90 youth are having fun, learning and developing life skills. In most cases, these children are the lowest performing students in their schools having difficulty passing the state test and/or getting peer grades in reading and math. Through these programs community partnerships have been established with organizations such as Indian River School District, Cape Henlopen School District, Woodbridge School District, Food Bank of Delaware, Delaware State Housing Authority, St. Martha’s Church, University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, parents/guardians, and teachers/counselors. The after-school programs are offered in the youth’s community year round with daily after-school programming and summer program camps.

4-H After-school provides a quality after-school experience focusing on homework help and individualized tutoring as well as quality 4-H experiential based learning activities utilizing the most up-to-date curricula available. Curriculum activities cover a wide range of topics in Science and Technology, Healthy Lifestyles and Nutrition, Community Service, Leadership, Arts and Crafts, Aerospace, Woodworking, Sewing, and Public Speaking. In addition all the programs offer nutritious snacks in collaboration with the Food Bank of Delaware.

**Impact:**
The impacts from these programs have been immediate and obvious. Participants showing improved performance in school work/homework, attendance and behavior. Parents are reporting that their children are learning significant life skills from participation in the 4-H after-school programs.

**Measureable Impacts include:**

**Burton Village**
- 14% of the participants improved their Math grades from fall to spring
- 43% of the participants improved their English grades from fall to spring
- 63% teachers reported improvement in homework completion and class participation
- 43% teachers reported improvements in student behavior

**Hickory Tree**
- 44% of the participants improved their Math grades from fall to spring
- 48% of the participants improved their English grades from fall to spring
- 62% teachers reported improvements in homework completion and class participation
- 63% teachers reported improvements in student behavior

Parents love the program and activities that the youth participate in.

**Lavery Lane**
- 58% of the participants improved their Math grades from fall to spring
- 53% of the participants improved their English grades from fall to spring
- 46% teachers reported improvements in homework completion and class participation
- 30% teachers reported improvements in student behavior

A parent has reported that her children call the after-school program the fun school.

**Funding Sources:**
Delaware Department of Education, 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grants

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