**Situation:**
The State of Delaware has made great gains in curbing tobacco use, and 4-H has been busy implementing a Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Prevention, and Healthy Life Skills program called Health Rocks. Delaware still has a responsibility to our youth as the 2011 University of Delaware’s “Kids Count in Delaware Study” reveals that smoking, marijuana, and alcohol use continues to rise in students in grades 5 thru 11. While “only” 1% of fifth graders have used cigarettes, and 2% have used alcohol within the last month, by 11th grade, 37% have used alcohol within the last month, 24% have used marijuana and 14% have used cigarettes. This alarming increase is a public health problem with devastating effects on the physical, social, intellectual, and emotional development of youth people.

**What Happened:**
For 10 years, Delaware 4-H has worked tirelessly to reach young people, and is creating positive youth development. Adult and teen educators reach students ages 8-15 in school, after school, during summer camps, and anywhere kids meet with 10 hours of education on the 8 National Health Education Standards with a special emphasis on tobacco, alcohol and drug use prevention. Children are taught strategies that prepare them to make healthy lifestyle choices.

In 2010 and 2011, our educators reached over 5500 youth with the Health Rocks Curriculum. At the 2011 Extension Conference, The Health Rocks Team was awarded an Outstanding Program Award of Excellence.

**Impact:**
Here is a sampling of the positive evaluation data for 2010:

- Nine out of ten youth participants had goals for their life and realized the importance of managing stress in a positive way, and it is not worth taking the risk to try cigarettes, alcohol, and other drugs.
- Nine out of ten youth participants were confident that they would be able to say “no” if other people such as peer friends offer them drugs, they would be able to choose healthy behaviors to deal with stress instead of turning to drugs or alcohol, and they would never use drugs.
- Over 90% of youth participants demonstrated social competency, volunteerism, self-confidence and strong values.
- Health Rocks training help youth learn skills in dealing with peer pressure and stress, and in making informed decisions. Youth participants reported the highest improvements in these specific skills.

**Help Us Get the Message Out:**
DE 4-H currently provides this education for free to students and educators throughout the state. Our 2012 goal is to reach 7000 young people in Delaware with the Health Rocks! message of Healthy Living. Won’t you help us serve youth and achieve our goal? To learn more, to schedule Health Rocks educators, or to learn how you can become a Health Rocks Educator, visit our website at [http://ag.udel.edu/extension/4h/youthsubstanceabuse.html](http://ag.udel.edu/extension/4h/youthsubstanceabuse.html) or call Karen Johnston, Extension Educator at 302-831-8866.