



DENVER 4-H: PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF YOUTH PROGRAMMING

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PROJECT INTRODUCTION

- My internship with the Denver branch of CSU Extension was significant in terms of professional growth, interpersonal relationship building, and growing in my understanding of what it means to work with children and youth.
- 4-H is a youth development organization that encourages youth of all backgrounds and ages to engage and develop meaningful skills. We practiced leadership, science, health practices, and the 4 H's: using one's head, heart, hands, and health.

INTERNSHIP GOALS

I set a number of learning objectives and goals to complete by the end of my internship with CSU Extension. These included:

1. Evaluate the needs of the children in the community → review interviews with community members and assess
2. Learn how community resources and services interact together and build working relationships to best benefit community members
3. Build professional and trusting relationships with the kids and further develop my professional skills

Figures 1 and 2: Denver 4-H STEAM Programs



HOW THIS APPLIES TO YOUR EDUCATION

- Working with Denver 4-H helped me to discover that my career aspirations are right for me, and it helped me see how influential I can be.
- I was able to apply the things that I have learned about resilience and supporting at-risk youth, including scaffolding, validation, patience, and promoting critical thinking as well as resilience.

WHAT YOU DID

- I assessed a number of interviews conducted by my supervisors and other employees at the Denver site. I was able to narrow down the themes, as can be seen in Table 1, in order to decide what program I could create to address the issues in youth's lives at that time.
- I assisted Denver 4-H in implementing Water and Geology programs among recreation centers in Denver, focusing on STEAM and learning.
- I faced a number of challenges, including dealing with remote issues, being a first generation student, and commuting difficulties. However, with the help of my supervisors and my CSU advisors, I was able to overcome these hurdles and progress in my internship.
- I also built relationships with my coworkers, community services and resources, and high school interns who were involved in Girls Inc. and multicultural studies.
- I created and facilitated my own program among the older children, roughly aged 9 to 12. My program was named "Foods From Around the World," and the program focused on learning about other cultures, their practices, and what types of food they eat. We made Mexican paletas, Chinese dragon beard candy, Mediterranean kebabs, Moroccan couscous, and Brazilian brigadeiros. The kids each got their own handmade passports, made Tibetan prayer flags, and got to plant herbs to take home with them.

Figure 2: "Food From Around the World" Program



WHAT YOU LEARNED

- I learned an extraordinary amount in my internship, not only about 4-H, but also about working with children and learning what it truly means to be an HDFS professional.
- I learned that many HDFS professionals play multiple roles in the community, and are still able to pursue their external passions and relate it to their work with children.
- I learned how to be flexible, creative, and independent during the course of my internship.
- Finally, I learned that I am in the right field. I am very passionate about working with children, and I believe that being a school counselor will allow me to develop supportive relationships with children. I also hope to provide resources to diverse and at-risk children, to provide them with the best outcomes as they develop.

Table 1: Table Name

Themes	What does this theme look like?	Does Denver 4-H address this theme?	If yes, how so?	If not, possible program?
Mental health	Trauma, violence, stigma around mental health issues and seeking help	Yes	Programming on difficult emotions and how to process them	
Language barriers	Lack of translators available	Yes	4-H offers bilingual programming	
Economic barriers	Inability to pay program fees, lack of access to transportation, less access to nutritious food	Yes	Program pricing set according to what desired audience can afford, etc.	Implementation of food education as a mode of fun and access to healthy foods: FFAW Program
Access barriers	Hearing about programs, understanding locations	Yes	Connections among the community to get the word out to at-risk youth	
College and career readiness, support	Children in school districts with less resources and supports often cannot help kids with future aspirations	Yes	Programming in schools to support kids, programs all promote healthy future outcomes for kids	

NEXT STEPS

- Denver 4-H taught me a great deal about working not only with a group of people, but with a community as a whole. I learned how to work alongside other community resources, in order to best support and teach the children I work with. Such community partners included the Department of Child Welfare, Girls Inc., GRASP, Soccer Without Borders, City Wild, and the LGBTQ Center.
- I am building upon the knowledge I gained in Denver 4-H, through co-facilitating a mindfulness program among at-risk youth and working with the Boys and Girls Club in Fort Collins.
- I believe this will support me in my upcoming endeavors, including City Year, graduate school, and as a school counselor.