Strategic Plan

Background Information

Mission, Vision and Values

Better Youth for Better Communities Model

Targeting Life Skills Model

Factors Defining Major RCE 4-H Youth Development Programs

Adopted by the Department of 4-H Youth Development 12-16-03
In 1990, the Department of 4-H Youth Development adopted its first Strategic Plan, developing mission, vision and value statements, along with an in-depth plan of action. In 2003, the department determined the need to review and update its strategic plan to ensure that department goals were in concert with the current Cook College/NJAES Strategic Plan http://www.cookvision.rutgers.edu, and National 4-H Strategic Plan http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/4h_plan.htm.

The plan presented in this document was based upon a process which included a survey of stakeholders and department members; a department retreat facilitated by Debbie McDonald, West Virginia State 4-H Program Leader; the work of a task force to synthesize concepts put forth at the retreat; and two department meetings to refine and finalize the plan.

While the initial plan was adopted on December 16, 2003, the plan will be a work in progress, as the department will continue to work on specific goals to ensure the implementation of the concepts in the plan.
4-H Mission Statement

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program uses a learn-by-doing approach to enable youth to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to become competent, caring, and contributing citizens of the world. This mission is accomplished by using the knowledge and resources of the land-grant university system, along with the involvement of caring adults.

4-H Vision Statement

The 4-H Program, a component of Rutgers Cooperative Extension, is the acknowledged leader in youth development in New Jersey. This contemporary program creates extraordinary opportunities for youth to develop life skills by:

- Providing a safe and supportive innovative environment for life-long learning, which facilitates creativity, growth, and healthy development in youth and adults.

- Implementing resourceful and innovative delivery modes, which rely upon experiential learning.

- Fostering volunteer development and youth-adult partnerships that enhance ethical decision-making, leadership skills, teamwork, and goal setting.

- Creating opportunities for youth of all ages to learn skills and attitudes that prepare them for the future workforce

- Leading collaborative efforts within the land-grant university system to develop nationally recognized programs and curricula.

- Empowering youth to become an active voice in their community.

- Participating in a culturally diverse global organization.

- Supporting the creation of a competent, professional, ethical, and healthy team of faculty and staff who are committed to the mission of the 4-H Youth Development Program.
4-H Department Values

The faculty and staff of the 4-H Youth Development Department in concert with the 4-H volunteers and members value the following characteristics of the 4-H Program in New Jersey:

Youth and adult have the opportunity to:

- learn new things.
- fulfill their personal needs of belonging to a group in a safe, non-judgmental environment.
- participate in activities that encourage positive social development.
- develop a positive self-esteem.
- develop workforce preparation skills.
- participate in educational events and programs.
- gain a sense of responsibility.
- foster positive youth-adult partnerships.
- demonstrate positive character traits.

Youth and adults develop skills that will enable them to make a positive contribution to society. These include:

- Public speaking
- Leadership
- Ethical decision making
- Goal-setting
- Problem-solving
- Record keeping
- Teamwork
- Valuing diversity
- Community service
- Volunteerism

Adopted by the Department of 4-H Youth Development 11-90; Revised 11-19-03
Life Skill Development for K-13 Youth using Experiential Learning Methods

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program uses a learn-by-doing approach to enable youth to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to become competent, caring, and contributing citizens of the world. This mission is accomplished by using the knowledge and resources of the land-grant university system, along with the involvement of caring adults.
The Department of 4-H Youth Development has adopted “Targeting Life Skills” as its official life skills model. The model is developed around the concept of “Head, Heart, Hands, and Health,” upon which the 4-H Pledge is based.
To be considered a major 4-H Youth Development Program, a program must:

- Reflect the mission/vision/values of the Department of 4-H Youth Development

- Align with the “Better Youth for Better Communities” model

- Address one or more of the four Cook College/NJAES Strategic Plan Program Areas

- Fulfill all facets of the Logic Model program development process

- Result in scholarly and creative activity as defined by the three criteria

Adopted by the Department of 4-H Youth Development 12-16-03