



4-H

OREGON

MORROW & UMATILLA COUNTIES

CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2005 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

THE CALL TO STAY IN SCHOOL

Formal education for Abelardo Molina's parents had ended by the third grade, but they were determined their son would go further. They credit the Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program with helping them achieve their goal. Now enrolled at Purdue University, Abelardo is working toward his masters, studying to become a pilot and maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

Abelardo's family is part of the growing Latino population in the rural Oregon counties of Morrow and Umatilla. In 1990, agencies working together to serve low-income families in these counties discovered that 30 percent of Latino youth were dropping out of local high schools.

In response, the agencies brought together parents, youth and community stakeholders to meet with local 4-H representatives. Their goal was to devise a strategy to motivate these young people to stay in school.



OUR OPEN DOOR TO FAMILIES MAKES
THE GREATEST IMPACT. WE WOULDN'T
SUCCEED IF WE DIDN'T WORK WITH PARENTS.

Roger Rennekamp, 4-H Program Leader and Department Head

GROWING BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS

“Expectations among schools were low for Latino students,” explains Patricia Dawson, the Umatilla County 4-H agent, who shaped Attitudes for Success with her Morrow County colleague, Bill Broderick. As a first step, they called on community partners to answer the question: “What will give young people a reason to stay in school?” A critical part of the answer came down to building interest among the youth in community leadership opportunities and higher education goals. Parents also had to be very much engaged.

The first Attitudes for Success program worked in four high schools, pairing young people with community mentors, involving parents in addressing cultural barriers to educational success and organizing the first all-day leadership conference, now a program hallmark.

Nearly 5,000 young people later, the 2006 Attitudes for Success leadership/college preparation conference needed auxiliary tents to accommodate a record number of youth who took advantage of a full slate of activities. An advisory panel, composed of students from all 14 Morrow and Umatilla high schools, led conference planning. Most important, the counties’ 1990 dropout rate has been halved and college admissions are up. “These young people have become role models for younger siblings, too,” adds Dawson, “And you have never seen a prouder group of parents!”

FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the National 4-H Council, the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards recognize outstanding 4-H programs that work to give children in rural communities what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.

4-H is a community of more than 7 million diverse young people across America learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. Through clubs, camps, school-based and after-school programs, 4-H makes a positive impact on the lives of urban, suburban and rural youth and their families. Youth learn and grow through participation in fun, hands-on learning experiences in areas including science, engineering, technology, healthy lifestyles and citizenship. “4-H connects families to programs and resources to help them succeed and grow stronger,” says National 4-H Council President and CEO Donald T. Floyd, Jr. “With the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards 4-H is able to reach rural families who often find themselves isolated from opportunities and supports to help secure their children's futures.”

MORROW AND UMATILLA COUNTIES, OREGON 4-H

Award-winning Program: Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program

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