

impact

University of Idaho Extension
programs that are making a
difference in Idaho.

Leadership institute: ambassadors gather to train, team build and share 4-H stories

AT A GLANCE

Leadership ambassadors formulate their philosophy, practice communication skills and plan programs for greater impacts to implement in their local community.

The Situation

Research indicates that youth who take on leadership roles early in life are more likely to thrive as adults and make positive impacts in their community. Local, statewide and national 4-H programming efforts specifically target life skill building and leadership development through hands on experiences.

Intentionally designed to encourage professional growth and development, the National 4-H Shooting Sports Ambassador Program aims to promote 4-H life skill development through the common thread of shooting sports. Teens from states across the nation are chosen to serve as ambassadors and receive training during the annual Leadership Institute Conference.

Our Response

Idaho's 4-H Shooting Sports program won the bid to host this national conference in 2025, held on University of Idaho Moscow campus (July 29-Aug. 2). Expertise sourced to deliver the conference included educators, coordinators and staff both nationally as well as local to UI Extension.

A common theme throughout the conference is "leadership." Educators brought in training content focusing on communication and professionalism and a



Ambassadors (32) attending the National 4-H Shooting Sports Leadership Institute held on U of I Moscow campus in July.

curriculum focusing on bystander intervention promoting firearm injury prevention (Guardians 4 Health). Conference classroom sessions emphasize learning about public relation communications, and strategies for speaking to professionals about shooting sports education and positive youth development. UI Extension personnel demonstrated team building, cooperative learning and showcased effective methods for leading activity and group debrief. A prominent goal of the four day 4-H Shooting Sports Ambassadors program is to provide opportunities for youth to build character, strengthen relationships and develop their leadership skills.



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Program Outcomes

Capstone activities hosted in Idaho and on campus included engaging classroom educational sessions, a whitewater rafting field trip and an etiquette dinner. Attendance at the Leadership Institute Conference resulted in 18 males and 14 females as newly dubbed National 4-H Ambassadors. An outcome focus is to expand their involvement in 4-H shooting sports beyond the shooting skills and competitive events. They may identify as spokespersons for the 4-H shooting sports program and provide public relations support at special events such as donor/sponsor functions. After attending the leadership institute training, they should feel confident and proud to help make 4-H and the 4-H shooting sports programs more visible. Based on trends from past conference participants, ambassadors are more inclined to stay actively connected with the 4-H shooting sports program as they enter their collegiate years and further into adulthood.

Teen ambassadors will take away new insights into team building through leading activities and participating in daily team building initiatives. They formulate and articulate a draft individual “4-H story” and for some, presented their story during a professional etiquette dinner among peers and professionals. Significantly, conference attendance culminates with each ambassador’s continued planning for implementation of a shooting sports service project idea in their local community. As a result, teen participants demonstrate their skills in leadership, public relations, citizenship and community service through conference activities.

The Future

Idaho’s 4-H Shooting Sports newly trained ambassadors (Zachariah Thomet of Canyon County and Cash Drake of Twin Falls County) are ready to debut their skills.

Both ambassadors can be called to service for local or state shooting sports contests. Additionally, ambassadors may be asked by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee to serve as a representative at a national event. Each year, a call for applications to become a national 4-H ambassador and attend the Leadership Institute Conference announced early spring. Idaho teen members enrolled in a shooting sports project who exemplify strong leadership are encouraged to apply.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Sponsors include the National 4-H Shooting Sports program and committee who approve and award the bid to host the Leadership Institute Conference. Chandra Plate of Kansas State University, Craven Hudson of University of Georgia, Ruth Pratt of Oklahoma State University and Scott Stuhr of National 4-H Shooting Sports were chaperone/educators for the event.

University of Idaho Extension 4-H Youth Development program hosted and helped to facilitate the experience on University of Idaho campus and on the Salmon River in Idaho.



Etiquette dinner with CALS administrative leaders as guests of honor. Director Barbara Petty demonstrates napkin etiquette.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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