Oregon State University | Extension Service

Engaging Latino Youth in Community-based Programs:

Findings from the first ten years of the Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Project

Beverly B. Hobbs, Ph.D,
Professor Emerita

Barbara Sawer, Ed.D,
Professor Emerita

Oregon State University

Corvallis, OR 97331

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Engaging Latino Youth in Community-based Programs

Across the nation, community-based organizations are facing the challenges that accompany serving new, ethnically and racially diverse audiences. For many communities this is the first time they have experienced foreign immigration and the cultural diversity it brings. Given a shortage of easily accessed information related to working with specific culturally diverse audiences, many organizations often proceed through a process of trial and error.

In actuality, there exists a wealth of knowledge and experience resident in organizations that have successfully worked with racially and ethnically diverse groups. However, programming demands leave little time for staff to think about synthesizing and sharing their information. As one attempt to make information about Latino outreach more accessible, the Oregon State University Extension 4-H program offers this publication to share knowledge and insight gained through the implementation of the Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Project. The intent is to provide pertinent and helpful information, particularly for those who are new to Latino outreach.

The findings from the Oregon 4-H Latino outreach experience are best understood within the context of the project design. The model for the Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Project is described below to set the stage for a discussion of outcomes that were shaped by basic decisions made early in the developmental process. Next, the Oregon 4-H approach to Latino outreach is summarized in terms of the three critical factors that guided initial project efforts and have continued to sustain ongoing programs. Finally, the body of knowledge accumulated through employing the model in rural and urban counties across Oregon is dis-

I've learned a lot through 4-H because they've taught me to use my talents, to be a leader, to be an example to others.

4-H member

cussed relative to the following programming considerations:

▶ Assessing organizational support for outreach efforts
▶ Connecting with Latino communities
▶ Staffing for outreach
▶ Designing culturally responsive programs
▶ Recruiting Latino youth participants
▶ Youth participation models
▶ Recruiting and supporting Latino volunteers
▶ Evaluating Latino outreach programs

While many of the observations and strategies included in the text may be applicable to a number of different cultures, it is important to note that this publication is based on experience gained in outreach to Latino audiences composed of first and second generation Latinos, the majority of whom identify Mexico as their country of origin. Application of the information, even within a group of Latinos, should always be considered in light of what is known specifically about an individual or group.

The Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Model

The Extension 4-H Youth Development Program at Oregon State University launched the Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Project in 1997, funded by a five-year CYFAR (Children, Youth, and Families at Risk) grant from CSREES, USDA. It currently has funding support from a CYFAR Sustainable Community grant and over the years has secured additional support from regional, state, and local funders. The purpose of the Outreach Project is to (a) increase access to community-based programs for Latino youth and families, as well as to (b) build Extension capacity for planning and delivering such programs. Efforts began with four demonstration sites; currently about half of the state's 36 counties are engaged in Latino youth outreach programming.

The Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Project has both local and state level components. At the local level, culturally responsive, educational youth programs are designed, implemented, and evaluated in partnership with the Latino community. The project's target audience is youth in grades K-12. Youth programs are delivered in the out-of-school hours year round. Some of these programs are located in schools and some are located in housing developments for Latino agricultural workers who are permanent U.S. residents. Delivery has occurred through after-school activities, school clubs, community clubs, residential and day camps, community garden projects, summer activity programs, and group mentoring experiences. All the programs offered are bilingual and delivered by bilingual, bicultural program staff and/or trained Latino volunteers. The educational objectives vary for each site, but all have elements of cultural awareness and appreciation, leadership development, and community service. The importance of education, especially postsecondary education, is infused throughout programming.

In addition to the 4-H and Extension resources dedicated for 4-H Latino outreach, local programs also develop partnerships with agencies and organizations to broaden support for the positive development of Latino youth. In this way resources are expanded for youth and families, and 4-H Latino outreach becomes a major contributor to a larger community outreach effort.

At the state level, the project provides leadership for 4-H Latino outreach efforts statewide by serving as a central point of contact for all 4-H staff engaged in outreach and by providing training and technical assistance to them. Additional assistance is provided for evaluating outreach programs and securing funding support.

> **4-H Tech Wizards is one of the best things that has happened in my life. The mentors have always been there for me, pushing and striving to help me do my best.**
>
> *4-H member*

The Oregon Approach to Latino Outreach

The Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Project model is used in all counties. It incorporates three critical factors in its approach to Latino outreach. First, 4-H Latino outreach efforts are premised on the belief that Latino community members possess unique knowledge and understanding regarding what Latino youth need to thrive. 4-H approaches the community with an open mind, ready to learn how the program can help promote the positive development of Latino youth.

Second, once the interests and needs of youth and families are identified, responsive programs are developed. These programs incorporate the following key findings generated by the research on successful programming for Latino youth:

▶ Programs respect and reinforce the cultural identity of youth. (Koss-Chionio & Vargas, 1999; National Youth Collaboration, 2009). Activities broaden cultural awareness and develop cultural pride.

▶ Programs are contextual. They are based on the reality of youth's lives, the interactions they face daily (Koss-Chionio & Vargas, 1999). They occur in an environment that "fits" who they are.

▶ Programs set high expectations for youth and help them to achieve their goals. Youth and families are also helped to understand how to achieve youth's high aspirations for a college education. (Rumbaut & Portes, 2001)

▶ Programs reinforce the existing social capital of youth found in their families and ethnic communities and work to expand it by strengthening ties to networks and resources in the greater community. (Stein, 2002)

▶ Youth are involved in active learning with opportunities to make real contributions to their communities. (Pitman, 2002)

▶ Programs provide an opportunity for youth to learn in an affinity group based on culture, and at the same time, encourage their participation in multi-cultural contexts. (Cortes, 1999)

▶ Parent involvement is encouraged as a way to support youth's learning as well as their serious consideration of education and careers (Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, 2002; Vasquez, 1998).

The third critical factor is the placement of bilingual/bicultural 4-H outreach staff (the outreach coordinator) at the county level for at least three years. The major barrier to Latino youth participation in community-based organizations is the fact that most parents have no prior experience with youth organizations. They lack an understanding of the benefits of such organizations and how to access them, and most importantly, they feel no connection and thus have no trust in them. The presence of staff with a deep understanding of Latino culture and fluency in Spanish enables 4-H to build the relationships and establish the trust that is needed. This takes sustained effort over time. Project experience indicates that a minimum of three years is needed to establish this foundation.

Assessing Organizational Support for Outreach Efforts

Before any outreach efforts are undertaken, it is advisable to assess the degree of support that exists within Extension for outreach to new audiences and to identify ways to strengthen that support. A strong foundation for outreach programming requires three elements—administrative leadership, agent commitment, and clientele support.

Extension Leadership: Demonstrated Support

The support of Extension leadership includes both top administrators at the state level and those in the counties. Extension, as an organization, must make a long-term commitment to serve the new audience. To begin outreach and then discontinue programming for whatever reason will break the trust that has developed with the Latino community and severely restrict the chances of reinstating a relationship in future years. It is not uncommon for Extension to use grant funds to support outreach. However, a long term commitment means a promise to continue programs even when grant funds are depleted. A long term commitment also means that the goals and values of the organization reflect the differences inherent in the cultures of all the people Extension serves.

Latino outreach efforts in Oregon began with no more of a formal long term commitment than that suggested by Extension's non-discrimination statement and the five year funding cycle of the initial CYFAR grant used to financially support the effort. Staff were convinced that by demonstrating positive outcomes for Latino youth and building a constituency at the state and local level in support of 4-H Latino outreach, they would gain long term administrative support. Indeed, that is what happened.

There are many steps that Extension administration might take to demonstrate support for Latino outreach. In Oregon, these steps included the following developments:

▶ The Extension Cabinet signed the Commitment to Diversity Proclamation reflecting a commitment to diversifying the organization as well as its audience.

▶ The Extension strategic plan identified outreach to Latino communities as a priority.

▶ An Extension Communications editor was appointed to provide Spanish-English translation of publications.

▶ An Extension Diversity specialist position was created to work across programs to help staff work with diverse groups and to particularly increase their skills in intercultural communication.

▶ Staff development opportunities were periodically provided throughout the year to increase Extension staff's knowledge and skills in working with diverse audiences.

Additionally, a state level 4-H specialist position was dedicated to supporting county 4-H Latino outreach efforts. This specialist helped to facilitate connections between county outreach staff, arranged staff development opportunities specific to outreach, secured grants to help support outreach programs, provided technical assistance on the design of culturally responsive programs, arranged to provide assistance with program evaluation to counties, and worked with staff chairs, helping Extension administrators at all levels develop an understanding of outreach programming and expectations. With regard to the latter, it was important for

> **Because of the educational and career presentations, a seed has been planted which will lead youth to become more involved in their education and to plan … to look toward a career.**
>
> *Parent of a 4-H Summer Camp participant*

Extension administrators to recognize Latino outreach is time intensive and results often come slowly. By acknowledging these facts, administrators created a safe environment for 4-H outreach efforts, allaying a major concern of 4-H agents that supervisors would under-value their efforts. This concern was repeat-edly voiced by 4-H agents early in the project, before there was a history of demonstrated administrative support.

The 4-H Agent: Personal Commitment

Outreach happens in communities, and the 4-H agents who will be involved have to want to be involved. Not only does outreach require a long term commitment, but especially for those not themselves Latino, it demands a will-ingness to entertain and respect new ways of "doing." Latino outreach will present challenges to a non-Latino's perspective on life and his/her sense of competency. It is a personal as much as a professional journey. In the words of a col-league, outreach demands an open heart, an inquiring mind, and the development of inter-cultural skills. Not all 4-H agents in Oregon were ready to walk this path.

Even when additional outreach staff is hired to implement programs, the 4-H agent must commit to actively participate in out-reach. It is not a responsibility that can wholly be turned over to outreach staff. In fact, out-reach is the responsibility of all Extension em-ployees, though some will be directly involved more than others. The effort depends on team-work. Latinos in the community will associate the program with people, not an organization. One of those people needs to be the 4-H agent. This reinforces the fact that outreach repre-sents a broadening of the county 4-H program, not the creation of a separate 4-H program. It also means that agents will have to give up, or find a new way of carrying out, some current activities to free time for outreach.

The Current Extension Audience: Informed and Educated

A third element in the foundation is the support of the existing Extension audience.

In 4-H, this means 4-H members, families, and volunteers. Before outreach is initiated, the 4-H agent should raise the current audience's level of awareness about the presence of Latino youth in the county and invite their comments on how 4-H might reach out and engage Lati-no communities. Varying attitudes exist in the general public regarding new audiences, their place in society, the services they should re-ceive, and so on. In Oregon there were a few Ex-tension agents who opposed Latino outreach programs, and some third and fourth genera-tion Latinos in one county also voiced opposi-tion. Local support for outreach is a definite asset. However, the presence of those who do not support outreach should not discourage its implementation. Challenges to outreach need to be addressed as part of outreach work.

Connecting with Latino Communities

Initial Steps

Relationships and trust underlie Latino community living. The lack of either severely limits outreach efforts. Initially, time must be dedicated to establishing a presence in the community and developing relationships with individuals, families, and organizations. This is a time to learn about the community, its people, and the cultural characteristics that influence the rhythm of life, as well as a time for staff to introduce themselves and their program. This step is key to gaining access to the community. It cannot be hurried and should be carried out in a nonthreatening and unobtrusive manner. At all times demonstrate respect for the culture.

Gaining access to the community can be facilitated in several ways. One way is to partner with other organizations that have established positive relationships within the community and are trusted by the people (churches, cultural organizations, schools).

This saves time and maximizes resources. Community members will transfer some of the respect they have for these organizations to the 4-H program and 4-H staff through association. These connections also help 4-H staff identify programs and services available in the community. Although Oregon staff was focused on 4-H programs, families who trusted staff sought assistance with problems that were unrelated to 4-H. Knowing what community resources were available enabled staff to make appropriate referrals. A second way to facilitate entry is to seek out formal and informal leaders in the community and gain their support. If this is done, contacts must continue to be maintained over time.

In these first attempts to connect, stay focused on what the people identify as their needs and interests. Give up any preconceived ideas. Keep an open mind both as to what needs to happen as well as how it needs to happen. Approach topics from a positive perspective, identifying assets as well as needs. Put the personal first, before moving to the task/program or service to be offered. Developing relationships and trust with community members will be on-going and should always take precedence.

Steps to Building Relationships with the Latino Community

▶ **Spend time in the community**

▶ **Listen**

▶ **Observe**

▶ **Participate in events**

▶ **Visit shops and restaurants**

▶ **Talk with community members**

▶ **Tune into the popular radio and television stations**

▶ **Read the local newspaper**

▶ **Demonstrate respect for the culture in all you do**

Facts to Gather About the Latino Community

▶ **Countries of origin represented**

▶ **Education levels of residents**

▶ **Languages spoken**

▶ **Immigration status of the people**

▶ **Names of respected elders in the community**

▶ **Names of official and unofficial leaders**

▶ **Ways people earn a living**

▶ **The level of involvement of Latinos in mainstream activities and services**

▶ **The issues and concerns the people have generally**

▶ **The needs and issues of youth**

▶ **Assets/resources of the community**

Group Meetings with Latinos

While personal meetings and conversations were a necessity for building relationships, times arose when a group meeting best served a purpose. For instance, a group meeting was found to be an excellent way to provide further information about 4-H opportunities for both adult volunteers and for youth. A major challenge was to attract people to the meeting, especially men who often decide what activities other family members pursue.

Experience and research has provided a checklist of suggestions that will make a meeting inviting to the Latino audience. These reflect the social and family orientation of Latino culture among other characteristics. People expect time to meet and talk with others in their extended family and community. They also want to be able to participate as a family. Children and adults are far less separated in Latino culture as compared with U.S. mainstream culture. By creating a familiar environment, 4-H is likely to get a more favorable response.

Knowing an audience well can provide cues to the challenges that Latinos may face with regard to participation. Long work hours, inconsistent work schedules, lack of transportation, limited financial resources, need for child care, and unfamiliarity with community-based youth organizations and/or meeting spaces are all possible barriers to participation. Taking these into consideration when planning meetings will go far to increase chances for a good turnout.

Creating a Welcoming Group Meeting

▶ **Consider the daily schedule of potential participants when setting meeting times**

▶ **Personally extend invitations to the meeting through visits or phone calls**

▶ **Supplement personal invitations with print information (flyers, posters) written in Spanish or Spanish/English**

▶ **Utilize Spanish radio spots**

▶ **Hold meetings in locations where the people will be comfortable**

▶ **Make it a social event with food, door prizes, and possibly music as a part of the meeting**

▶ **Have something for people to do or look at when they arrive before the meeting begins. Play lively music while the group is gathering**

▶ **Accommodate language preferences**

▶ **Greet people at the door as they enter and thank them individually as they leave**

▶ **Use techniques to accommodate late arrivals (post a timed agenda, post notes summarizing discussion as it occurs during the meeting, keep the meeting room door open, position a staff member near the door to briefly and quietly welcome latecomers**

Barriers to Participation in the Mainstream and Accommodations

Long and varied work schedules of adults	➡ Make home visits, offer multiple options for meetings
Lack of transportation	➡ Arrange for car pools
Lack of childcare	➡ Provide childcare
Limited or no English language skills	➡ Employ bilingual staff
Limited financial resources	➡ Limit the cost of participation, offer scholarships
Fear of discrimination	➡ Demonstrate respect for the Latino culture
Lack of knowledge about available opportunities and how to access them	➡ Encourage staff and partners to extend outreach

Staffing for Outreach

Needed Qualifications

Given the intensive time commitment of initial outreach efforts and the fact that most 4-H agents were not fluent in Spanish and lacked a deep understanding of Latino culture, most Oregon county 4-H programs involved in Latino outreach hired additional staff (outreach coordinators) to support Latino outreach. Each outreach coordinator was charged with three tasks:

▶ Design, implement, and evaluate culturally responsive educational youth programs in partnership with Latino communities.

▶ Recruit, train, and support a cadre of community Latino volunteers to assist in the delivery of educational programs to youth.

▶ Develop and/or work with a local collaboration to promote positive youth development for Latino youth.
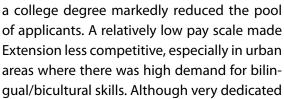
While hiring bilingual/bicultural Latinos would seem to be the answer to staffing needs, it was not as straightforward as one might think. Several other issues had to be considered.

First, it was difficult to find individuals who were bilingual/bicultural and who possessed the other skills and knowledge necessary to develop and implement positive youth development programs. Also, existing employment recruitment practices did not usually reach a very large number of Latinos. New networks had to be found and tapped to make potential Latino staff aware of positions available, and position announcements needed to be carefully crafted so they would resonate with potential applicants. For instance, reference to *helping the community* or *supporting the education of Latino youth* were goals with which Latinos readily identified. Additional complicating factors were the level of education required of staff and the level of pay offered. Requiring a college degree markedly reduced the pool of applicants. A relatively low pay scale made Extension less competitive, especially in urban areas where there was high demand for bilingual/bicultural skills. Although very dedicated and skilled people were found for outreach positions, attracting qualified applicants was often a lengthy process.

Being Latino and possessing bilingual/bicultural skills were undoubtedly qualities of staff that facilitated the Latino outreach process. However, just as important was the staff person's ability to relate to the target audience and earn their trust. Some Latino staff,

The 4-H program is something our community was waiting for. We were hoping someone would begin to get the Hispanic community together. Now that the 4-H program has begun, we are all happy.

Community member and volunteer

who had a very different life experience from those in the local Latino community, found it difficult to gain the trust of the people. This was especially true if class differences were substantial. On the other hand, non-Latino staff who possessed the needed bilingual/bi-cultural skills and who could relate to the people were very successful in earning their trust. Another factor in successful hiring was the match between the goals of 4-H and the professional goals of staff. In one instance, a well educated and well connected Latina was hired to work with youth, yet her career goal was to work on immigration issues. The mismatch led her to leave the position with 4-H.

One 4-H agent who experienced the challenges of finding staff with needed skills often remarked that "growing our own" would eventually offer the solution to the problem, In 2009 her vision materialized when a former high school participant returned after completing college to lead the 4-H outreach program he had participated in years before.

Retaining Staff

Once the right people for outreach were hired, the next challenge was keeping them. Partners and others, including other 4-H programs, tried to hire them away! As previously stated, 4-H did not have a competitive edge based on salary; however 4-H did offer Latino staff a way to give back to their community, a value that is very deeply felt within the Latino culture and one that was often mentioned by staff as a reason for their efforts. As one outreach coordinator commented, "It is work from the heart." Beyond personal motivation, it was important the staff also felt welcomed and valued and were recognized for their accomplishments.

A first and basic step taken by Extension county offices was to create a welcoming work environment so that all employees felt comfortable. Multiple cultures were reflected through the presence of bilingual signs and in-

formation sheets, pictures of diverse program participants, and/or artifacts on display. These visual symbols of diversity, however, needed to be complemented with strategies more basic to the way Extension carries out its work.

Introduction of new outreach staff to the culture of Extension and how the outreach position related to the greater organization helped to set the organizational context for their work. It was also important to make clear the specific expectations for the outreach position. Most Latino staff were unfamiliar with 4-H or any other youth organization. The obvious was not necessarily understood. Careful thought had to be given to explaining an unfamiliar organization and program area. In addition, while staff came with excellent language and cultural skills, most needed training in

the design and imple- mentation of youth educational programs, not unlike many other new 4-H program staff. When time was devoted to educating and mentoring the new Latino staff, their success and thus their satisfaction with 4-H were more likely to be achieved.

The step most critical to retention was found to be achieving an office environment that reflected respect and acceptance of differences in communication and work styles on the part of all staff.

Another step taken to increase staff retention was helping staff make reasonable commitments of their time. In local Extension offices, outreach staff were often called upon to help other programs with translation or to facilitate connection with Latino community members. Other organizations invited staff to serve on committees or take on other responsibilities. Helping to limit the demands placed on staff increased the probability that they would enjoy and persevere in their work.

Formal recognition of efforts provided positive feedback to Latino staff by acknowledging their valued contributions. One of the ways staff was recognized and rewarded was by valuing their knowledge and experience. Staff was always included in the development of training, both in the planning and delivery. Staff was also routinely invited to be a part of state, regional, and national presentations related to outreach efforts. Indeed, their voices were often the ones audiences most often wanted to hear.

The step most critical to retention was found to be achieving an office environment that reflected respect and acceptance of differences in communication and work styles on the part of all staff. New outreach efforts were not always appreciated by others in the Extension office. Although workshops brought to Extension offices facilitated understanding between cultures, the building of working

relationships was key and demanded patience, an open mind, and tolerance for trying new ways on the part of all. In the early years the Oregon Outreach Project's focus was on developing relationships with community members and making 4-H a welcoming and responsive experience. It was only when conflicts started arising in the Extension office workplace that it became evident attention needed to be given to creating a successful multicultural work place.

Outreach Staff as a Team

In addition to the steps mentioned above designed to support Latino outreach staff, the state specialist for outreach organized periodic (usually three/year) outreach meetings for educational as well as team building purposes. Outreach staff (4-H agents and outreach coordinators) clearly indicated that the periodic meetings were very important

to their sense of accomplishment as well as being a source of information and ideas. Agents and outreach coordinators can feel quite isolated in their counties. Especially in the early years, there were few staff to regularly communicate with about outreach. Staff was supported by seeing themselves as part of a greater group, having time to meet and talk about their work. Their individual experiences provided a wealth of knowledge about Latino outreach. Just sharing what they were doing and learning provided an educational experience for all who attended.

These state meetings of all outreach staff involving both agents and coordinators eventually led to smaller groups of Latino outreach coordinators only meeting to talk about outreach. Although every effort was made to create a welcoming atmosphere at the larger more inclusive meetings, the opportunity to meet without their supervisors present and to use Spanish to communicate seemed to offer a safer and more comfortable place to voice ideas, check perceptions, and talk about concerns. These meetings were informal and arranged by one or more of the outreach coordinators.

Outreach Without Additional Staff

Not all 4-H programs will have the funds to hire an outreach coordinator. However, outreach is still possible. Three approaches were used in Oregon. One involved offering programs in partnership with an organization that shared similar goals and which had access to a Latino audience. Working with the organization, 4-H delivered its programs to youth.

A second approach involved finding one or more bilingual community volunteers to provide interpretation between the 4-H agent and monolingual Spanish-speaking Latino volunteers. This allowed the agent to train and

support Latino volunteers even though they did not share the same language.

The third approach became possible when two county 4-H agents who possessed some Spanish language skills and a deep interest in expanding their understanding of Latino culture decided to take on outreach efforts without other outreach help. In these cases, grant funding allowed the agents to hire other staff to pick up approximately half of the traditional program responsibilities, enabling the agents to devote half of their time to outreach.

The first two approaches definitely had more limited impact as compared to programs with additional bilingual/bicultural staff. However they did provide a beginning for establishing relationships between 4-H and Latino community members and demonstrated the type of programs 4-H has to offer. The third approach was implemented in the summer of 2009 and outcomes are unknown at this point.

Designing Culturally Responsive Programs

Building on the research focused on working with Latino youth, the Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Project designed its programs to be culturally responsive. As such, the programs reflected the daily lives of youth, acknowledged and demonstrated respect for their culture, and reinforced their cultural identity. Culturally responsive programs speak to the wishes of parents who want to preserve their culture and language. Culturally responsive programs also increase the chances of successful outcomes for youth. Research demonstrates that youth who are comfortable with their home culture do better negotiating life in two cultures as opposed to those who are not solid in their home culture (Koss-Chionio & Vargas, 1999).

Youth had many interests, some tied to Latino culture (cultural dance and soccer), others more reflective of youth in general (robotics and videography). The key to gaining Latino participation in any program was incorporating strategies that made programs culturally responsive. Such strategies were developed by examining core values that condition certain ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving in traditional Latino culture. Through this process, a framework was developed that addressed specific aspects of those values and corresponding implications for programming in a culturally responsive way (Sawer, 2006).

Traditional Latino Cultural Values and Implications for Culturally Responsive Programming[1]

Traditional Cultural Values	Implications for Programming
SELF AND FAMILY	
Family is all-important. Family structures are hierarchal and patriarchal. Extended families are the norm. Older siblings take care of younger siblings. Family loyalty is very strong. Children often participate in the family work; preferred activities involve all family members. When a family obligation conflicts with a work obligation, family usually takes precedence. Independence is not encouraged; the welfare of the group is of primary importance. Parents soon learn about the importance of education in the U.S. They are interested in their children doing well, but may not be comfortable in initiating contact with teachers.	Assess the needs and assets of the specific community you want to reach. Plan efforts that build on group experience rather than individual effort. Use cooperative rather than competitive activities. Offer and promote youth programs emphasizing family values, cultural heritage, teamwork, group learning, success in school, benefits to the community. Expect that parents may bring children to parent activities and that older children may bring younger children to youth activities. Consider programs that involve the whole family. Promote programs in ways that inform males involved in family decision-making.
RELATING TO OTHERS	
Communication patterns are likely to be indirect. Sometimes intermediaries are used to convey messages, particularly in the case of bad news. When asked their opinion, people might be likely to tell you what they think you want to hear rather than what they actu-	Be sensitive to role and status issues. Use formal names and proper titles when addressing or referring to adults (not just first names). Expect to be seen as an authority figure in learning situations. Don't call on a specific person to answer a question in a group—ask ev-

ally believe. Formal titles are often used; status and authority are shown deference. Looking down while being addressed by someone in authority is a sign of respect. Teachers are considered to be authorities and knowledgeable experts. It is considered unusual for teachers to ask parents how much they think their children have learned—if the teacher doesn't know, then who does? People tend to avoid behavior that sets them apart from others. Some residents are undocumented and might be uncomfortable when questioned by authority figures.

eryone the same question instead. Don't expect children (or even some adults) to "look you in the eye". Avoid introducing yourself or your program as being affiliated with the federal or state government. Take time to get to know the people. Hire bilingual, bicultural program staff and support them well. Use indirect methods of collecting data, such as end-of-activity de-briefing sessions, listening posts, dialogue and reflection. Ensure anonymity if paper-and-pencil instruments are used. Focus groups or group interviews work well in some situations.

ATTITUDE TOWARD CHANGE

Value is placed on stability, continuity, and harmony. Change is often thought to be brought about through fate or nature and assessed in a historical context, not managed by people. The supernatural may be part of everyday life. Behavioral motivators may be spiritual. Group decisions involve consulting with important family members, agreeing with authorities, or conforming to the group. Leadership is vested in authority and status. Respect, honor, and trust are important considerations. Survival depends more on knowing how to deal with particular people than in fitting comfortably into a smooth-running organization.

Focus early efforts on shared values to help build cooperation and mutual trust. Collaborate with other like-minded agencies and organizations. Involve respected leaders at key points. Recognize that it will take time to build trust levels and that change is likely to occur in small increments. Don't be overly concerned if initial efforts don't reach a "critical mass" or attendance is erratic—revise your definition of participation. Incorporate opportunities for assessment from the very beginning of the program. Make mindful decisions and be attentive to each aspect of the programming process.

FORMS OF ACTIVITY

One works primarily to satisfy immediate needs. Any accumulated wealth is shared rather than saved. Time is indefinite and incidental-things are done as they need to be done and take as much time as they need. Volunteer efforts tend to be informal and spontaneous. Emphasis is on living in the present, taking each day as it comes, rather than planning for the future or thinking in the long-term. People are used to doing many things at the same time—for example, store clerks may wait on more than one customer at a time, serious discussion may occur amid loud music and lots of varied activity.

Be flexible and responsive. Work "in tune" with group momentum. Try activities that occur simultaneously; play Latino music before or during activities to create a lively, welcoming atmosphere. Offer refreshments of ethnic foods. Build opportunities to observe or record behavior into the learning activities. Avoid firm timelines and due dates. Realize that other activities may take precedence over learning. Extend personal invitations to potential volunteers. Emphasize benefits to youth and the community. Use terms like "helping" rather than "teaching" or "leading". Initially recruit for short-term assignments only.

[1] Source: Sawer, 2000, rev. 2006. Included in this table are some traditional and generalized Latino cultural values that contrast central themes reflected in mainstream U.S. culture. (Individuals in both cultures exhibit varied behaviors.) These values are synthesized from numerous sources. The author, however, takes responsibility for how they appear in this table. The list of implications is not exhaustive, but intended to stimulate thinking, and was generated from programming experience. While the author has taken care to present this information from a respectful, non-biased perspective, it should be noted that her predominately Euro-American cultural background still influences her approach.

The design of culturally responsive programs began by inviting Latino youth and adults to work with 4-H to build a vision for youth and identify their needs and interests. Community-based focus groups proved helpful in assessing needs and interests. Time spent informally with youth talking about their interests and their dreams also yielded rich information. In talking with Latinos, the goals of 4-H were introduced and related directly to the concerns of community members. Examples showing how 4-H can personally benefit youth were shared. Parents were particularly attracted to benefits directly related to their children's education.

After completing an initial needs assessment, the process of program development continued forward guided by a community advisory group and feedback from participants. This process required an open mind on the part of 4-H staff as new ideas and program practices were introduced. For example, culturally specific projects like cultural dance or Mexican cooking were requested by youth, and parents often wanted and expected periodic feedback related to their child's participation. It was very important to maintain parent support for 4-H participation, particularly among fathers. Home visits and phone calls from staff were two popular ways used to maintain the connection with families. Participants also often preferred to use Spanish during activities or wanted more family-focused programming. Additionally, remembering the importance of personal relationships in Latino culture, programs needed to allow time for youth to interact and strengthen relationships with their peers.

Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Program Characteristics

▶ **Programs are holistic in perspective**

▶ **The community has a voice in program development**

▶ **The cultural identity of youth is acknowledged and reinforced**

▶ **Both Spanish and English are used**

▶ **Family oriented programs in addition to youth focused programs are offered**

▶ **Culturally specific projects are available**

▶ **Bilingual/bicultural staff support programming**

▶ **A cultural affinity group is provided for youth while encouraging them to participate in multicultural contexts**

▶ **Programs set high expectations**

▶ **Separate training for Latino volunteers is provided as needed**

Adding new content and new approaches to program delivery in 4-H was not always well accepted by those with a more traditional view of 4-H. Questions and concerns arose.

4-H agents and outreach coordinators had to be prepared to respond from an educational perspective, helping people understand why new ways of offering 4-H were needed and how they reflected principles of best practice in positive youth development programs.

Recruiting Latino Youth Participants

A major challenge for 4-H outreach was recruiting prospective Latino youth participants. The most successful way to recruit Latino participation was by personal invitation. Note that from a cultural perspective it is important to invite people to participate rather than to simply announce that 4-H has spaces for youth participants. In some instances the outreach coordinator directly approached Latino youth and/or families, informing them of the opportunities in 4-H and extending an invitation for them to join or to attend an informational meeting to learn more about 4-H. For instance, in one county the outreach coordinator spent considerable time at several high schools during lunch hours and after school getting to know youth and their interests. After a period of time she proposed a program that addressed their interests and at that point invited them to participate.

In other cases, 4-H delivered programs to Latino youth in partnership with other organizations that already had a connection with the youth (museums, farmworker housing units, after-school programs). In those instances it was often the partnering organization that initially extended the invitation to participate.

Personal invitations were often supplemented by invitations made over Spanish radio. Spanish radio is very popular, conveying a certain amount of credibility to information it provides. Flyers and posters were also distributed in the community to reinforce invitations, but they had limited results when used by themselves.

Across all counties it was much easier to recruit Latino youth for 4-H membership than it was to recruit Latino adults as volunteers. In one county over 300 youth signed up for 4-H, but only three Latino volunteers were willing to conduct programs without the presence of the outreach coordinator. It was an impossible situation and resulted in most youth never getting a chance to participate. After that lesson, programs were careful to recruit youth only when they had volunteers ready to lead clubs or activities without the presence of the outreach coordinator.

> **it is important to invite people to participate rather than to simply announce that 4-H has spaces for youth participants.**

Structuring Youth Participation

It was the goal of the outreach programs to have all youth in 4-H freely mix together dependent on their interests rather than on their ethnic or racial background. To get to that point, three different approaches were used with regard to the ethnic composition of youth in clubs or activities.

Outreach programs specifically targeted Latino youth, and as a result Latinos made up nearly all the 4-H club participants resulting from outreach efforts. All-Latino 4-H clubs offered advantages for Latino youth. The presence of Latino adult volunteers, the frequent use of Spanish, and the fact that youth shared a common life experience helped to create a welcoming environment where they felt safe to try something new. The subject matter explored by clubs differed considerably, ranging from culturally-based programming such as soccer and cultural dance to the more traditional 4-H projects of gardening, computer science, and natural resources. Whatever the topic, these clubs offered youth a protected space where they could learn skills and learn more about 4-H without having to deal with two cultures. As their confidence grew as 4-H participants, the youth were encouraged to expand their participation to include other 4-H opportunities.

A second approach was to start new clubs with members recruited from across racial and ethnic backgrounds or to combine Latino and Anglo clubs that shared a common project interest. This approach facilitated the mixing of youth and adult leaders from different cultural backgrounds and fostered relationships across cultures. It also encouraged people to think of Latino youth as a part of the existing 4-H program rather than as part of a separate 4-H program, a problem that arose when Latino youth were in clubs overwhelmingly composed of Latinos only.

A third option was to encourage Latino youth to join existing clubs that usually had 100% Anglo membership. The success of this approach seemed to depend on the motivation of Latino youth and/or the support of their parents. Youth who had a strong interest in learning specific skills taught in an Anglo club joined that club regardless of its racial/ethnic composition. Parents who had formed a positive relationship with the outreach coordinator, and who had developed an understanding of 4-H and what it offers youth, encouraged their children to participate in 4-H activities regardless of the racial/ethnic composition of the other participants. These factors were identified in both first and second generation families.

No matter which approach was used, it was apparent that reaching a truly integrated 4-H program demanded more than bringing youth of different ethnic and racial backgrounds together as 4-H participants. It also required designing activities in such a way that youth would be drawn to interact across ethnic and racial lines. Further, it required that the voice of diverse youth be incorporated in the planning of activities, including regional and statewide activities, to ensure that those activities were welcoming to Latino youth.

Inclusiveness also demanded that Latino youth and adults were represented on local 4-H advisory boards in sufficient numbers to get beyond mere tokenism. To be truly integrated or inclusive, 4-H had to incorporate all voices. This latter strategy led advisory board members to better understand each other and the communities they represented and, in turn, impacted policy. County programs achieved varying degrees of success in recruiting Latinos to serve on county 4-H advisory boards. As with other aspects of outreach, creating a welcoming and well functioning multicultural advisory board took extra thought, extra time, and extra effort.

Please keep supporting us and our kids so they will have something good to get involved in and have a better future.

4-H parent

Recruiting and Supporting Latino Volunteers

Recruiting Latino Volunteers

In most Latin American countries volunteering refers to the efforts made by the very rich to help the poor. It is not something that most first or second generation Latinos in the United States have done. On the other hand, Latino adults are very familiar with helping. In fact helping pervades Latino communities. Giving back to one's community is a value that is of major importance. People help within their families, their neighborhood, and their church. Whenever there is a need there are people ready to meet that need whether it is through contributions of time, money, or other resources. This informal, largely unplanned response to the needs of others is usually short termed. It is seen as a part of life, a community member's responsibility.

Given this difference in meaning of the word *volunteer*, it was important to carefully define exactly what 4-H asks of a volunteer.

Oregon staff actually avoided use of the word *volunteer* whenever possible, preferring instead to use *help or helping*. They also avoided comparing a 4-H helper to a teacher. Teachers are held in great esteem in Mexico and most first generation adults have limited education. People would not see themselves as a teacher. Comparing work with 4-H youth to how a parent works to help their children was a more effective approach.

As mentioned previously, personal conversations with Latinos work best when trying to recruit participants, and this was certainly true when recruiting adults as adult 4-H helpers. During these conversations it was explained how their time, skills, and knowledge would help make a positive difference in the lives of youth and in turn, the community. Staff was more successful in recruiting if they asked for short term commitments, as is true with other audiences. In most cases staff had to initially conduct programs so that Latino families

could better understand what 4-H "looks like" in action. Only then could they make a decision as to the value of 4-H and the role they might play.

Supporting and Training Latino Volunteers

Once Latino adults were recruited to help implement programs, staff more often than not found it necessary to help them through the paperwork that is required to become an enrolled volunteer. The paperwork can be intimidating for people with limited education and/or fear of how the information will be used. By carefully explaining why the information is requested, who will see it, and how it will be used, staff alleviated much anxiety. Latinos with low literacy levels in both English and Spanish also required assistance in completing forms. While it is important to have forms printed in Spanish as well as English, it is not enough for Latinos who have a different first language or who may not be literate in any language.

Training for Latino volunteers was usually provided separately to accommodate not only language and literacy considerations but also their information needs. With limited understanding of mainstream U.S. culture and usually no understanding of Extension and 4-H, they needed additional time to grasp how the 4-H program delivers its educational programs, the role they would play, how they would be supported, and so on. Outreach staff reported that demonstration and group interaction were among the more successful teaching strategies they used in the training. Handouts were only useful as brief summaries of the information presented.

It was not unusual for some volunteers to be unwilling to assume sole responsibility for a club or activity even though they had been through training. Lack of experience with 4-H, and in particular with their role, caused them to hesitate. Pairing new volunteers with outreach staff or seasoned volunteers allowed them to build confidence in their own abilities before working alone. Periodic interaction with the 4-H agent or outreach coordinator helped volunteers to feel supported and valued.

Recognizing Latino Volunteers

Good volunteer management recommends that all volunteers be recognized for their contributions. While Latinos generally are an unassuming people who avoid the spotlight as individuals, signs of appreciation are valued. Some may be made uncomfortable if singled out in front of a group, but more informal recognition is welcomed by all. Designing the recognition within the cultural context made it most meaningful. Personal words of appreciation, certificates noting contributions, and thanking people through the 4-H newsletter were some of the ways employed to recognize Latino volunteers. Keeping in mind the importance of family, some counties held family pot luck dinners as recognition events, and one county arranged a camping trip for volunteers and their families as part of its recognition plan.

This is an excellent organization, please continue to support the children; we are willing to take part in this.

4-H parent

Evaluating Latino Outreach Programs

Overall, the project used a "soft path" evaluation approach to enable trusting relationships with the Latino community to develop without intrusive or high-level scrutiny. Evaluation activities were integrated into project design, delivery, and documentation processes, guided by a five-tier evaluation model (Callor, Betts, Carter, & Marczak, 1996) that was foundational to CYFAR state-strengthening projects. It was important that all actions be done in a mindful way, and the model provided an evaluative framework that helped maintain focus throughout the project. As a result, project evaluation included adaptations of many familiar techniques as well as several new approaches, all designed to capture information while accommodating various cultural factors. Some of these are described below, in terms of techniques applied to (a) program design and implementation and (b) program outcomes and effectiveness.

Evaluating Program Design and Implementation

Field study. After an extensive community-wide needs assessment identified concerns about the high rate of school dropout for Latino youth, the 4-H staff at one of the project sites arranged for a young adult Latina to interact with Latino youth as a school volunteer. She visited local high schools several times a week, informally engaging Latino youth (identified by teachers) in conversation about their interests. Her information and insights were shared in dialogue with the 4-H staff throughout this process and informed the eventual development of 4-H Tech Wizards. The resulting program design incorporated the youths' expressed interests in a mentoring and leadership development program that would (a) teach media, computer, and Internet technology skills; (b) promote awareness of technol-

ogy industries; and (c) explore engineering, math, and science careers.

Visualization. Another site used what was described as a "visual variation of a focus group" in an initial meeting of Latino high school students and parents, school officials, and Extension staff. Some attendees were bilingual, others monolingual. Through translators, group members were asked to visualize a future for their children and create a simple poster or collage to communicate that vision. Paper, paste, tape, paints, pens, scissors, magazines for clipping, and other supplies were available. This facilitated activity served as an icebreaker, helped to identify program direction, and began to build rapport and a support base as people realized the commonalities of their visions. The exercise led to the establishment of a school drop-in center for Latino youth, with activities coordinated by 4-H outreach staff.

Focus groups. At the outset of the project, focus groups were used to increase understanding of the Latino culture as related to volunteerism in community-based organizations. Three focus groups involved a total of eighteen participants,

including thirteen who were Latino. All had actively recruited and supported Latino volunteers in their organizations. Transcriptions of taped discussions formed the basis of a qualitative study, with data analyzed and interpreted using a schematic content analysis strategy. The findings from this formative research were applied to develop strategies for recruiting, supporting, and recognizing project volunteers (Hobbs, 2000).

Trolling and eavesdropping. These two related techniques took advantage of the indirect communication patterns characterizing Latino culture. Project staff circulated during an activity (a family program, for example) alerted to listen for comments they were "intended to overhear". A variation, similar to a "listening post" technique, involved orienting designated listeners to troll a room or activity. These designates listened for comments relating to particular aspects of programming or asked previously determined questions to individuals or small groups of participants in an informal way. These techniques were particularly helpful to provide feedback in early stages of program planning and delivery.

Home visits. At a site involving students at risk of school dropout, outreach staff conducted regular home visits and called parents frequently to keep them informed about their children's progress in an after-school program and to encourage them (especially fathers) to continue supporting their children's participation. In some cases, parents expressing particular family needs were alerted to relevant community support opportunities. Staff kept notes of their contacts and discussed them with the local outreach coordinator. In another program, home visits were scheduled to interview parents regarding the feedback they got

> **These types of activities are great because they bring families together. To me that's very important. We have more time with our children.**
>
> *4-H parent*

from their children's participation in a five-day residential camp.

Evaluating Program Outcomes and Effectiveness

The overriding goal of the outreach project was to increase the participation of Latino youth in the Extension 4-H youth development program. Assessing the outcome of this goal involved straight-forward tracking of enrollment numbers, making comparisons with previous years, and drawing conclusions. For example, in the seventh year of outreach, Oregon 4-H could report that Latino youth enrollment was 400% higher than at the beginning of the project.

Evaluating more specific outcomes of local programs was more complex. The variety in content, objectives, activities, dosage, and delivery led to a considerable number of evaluations that were program-specific. Examples of various approaches appear below.

Embedded assessments. Data related to educational objectives were sometimes collected as part of an activity that was part of the curriculum design, such as periodic Q & A sessions to review learning and check comprehension and the debriefing of field trips or other special activities. Some assessments were unobtrusive measures embedded in group activity. For example, youth in a video and media arts project videotaped each other at the beginning of the project answering questions such as "What do you expect from this project?" and at the end of the project responding to "What did you get out of this project?" In addition to providing an opportunity to compare pre and post responses, initial taping efforts at the beginning of the project could be compared with more ad-

vanced production skills demonstrated at the end of the project. Another example involved a lesson plan featuring a reflective discussion of the personal benefits of service learning projects, with opportunities for group sharing as well as written individual feedback. Both examples worked well with small groups.

Assessment (advancement) logs. Skill acquisition logs were used in an after-school technology program to record individual student learning. Items in a list of competencies were initialed by teacher/mentors as they were accomplished by the participants. Since there was an initial concern that this practice might not be consistent with a cultural emphasis on group rather than individual achievement, the logs were first used as unobtrusive measures. Students soon took notice, however, and got caught up in the excitement of seeing their list of competencies growing. The "group achievement" aspect played out as all members of the group helped each other "get" the skills so they could all advance to the next level. Individual results were then aggregated, enabling staff to report such findings as "95% of participating youth acquired proficiency in all 35 competencies relating to video production."

Interviews and surveys. Since many parents of youth participating in the outreach project had only a few years of formal schooling, literacy was an issue at times. The project usually relied on individual or group interviews where feedback from adults was concerned. Simple surveys were successful with illiterate adults when they were able to take the forms home for assistance from a literate friend or family member (used to collect feedback related to an after school program, for example) or when assistance was provided to read questions and record responses (used to collect data from parents attending end-of season 4-H soccer activities). The response rate for both examples was high. Short paper-and-pencil surveys worked well with youth in Grade 5 and up as long as simple vocabulary and few response categories were used. Some groups of older youth wanted surveys in English, while some preferred Spanish. Some project surveys were printed in both languages. Group interviews worked well with youth of all ages and were consistent with Latino group orientation preferences.

Family fiestas. Outreach staff learned to capitalize on Latino cultural values that celebrate family togetherness and involve music, food, and fun. An evaluation of 4-H Adventure Trips provides an example. Evaluation data were collected in a reunion of former Trip participants and their families. The evening program consisted of a dinner featuring Mexican foods, music by the Latino 4-H Family Guitar Band, and slides of Adventure Trip highlights. Following these activities, the attendees were divided into three groups that met simultaneously. Older youth participated in group interviews, facilitated by youth leaders supported by Extension staff, and also filled out brief survey forms. Younger youth were interviewed as a group. Parents met in a group conversation, facilitated by local project staff seeking feedback through evaluative questions and a request for suggestions and recommendations. The turnout was excellent and both youth and adults commented on their enjoyment of the activities.

Dialogue and reflection. Dialogue and reflection were used by state and local project

staff in periodic staff meetings to examine program progress. The resulting data were framed in terms of "successful practices" that addressed building partnerships and relationships with the Latino community, developing culturally appropriate programs for youth, and staffing factors related to paid and volunteer staff. This information was incorporated into a set of informational sheets used for staff development and project-sharing opportunities, as well as reporting purposes.

Program reviews. Outreach program reviews were a participatory process where state and local project staff met collaboratively for an in-depth look at a local program. The reviews were intended to be congenial, informative sessions where local staff could showcase their programs while at the same time state staff could become more knowledgeable about program activities and more aware of how they could best provide support. The reviews were timed to take advantage of other regularly scheduled reflective activities such as annual program planning and reporting. Questions concerned programs offered and participant responses, collaborative efforts, volunteer involvement, and program sustainability. The overall tone was conversational, and the questions and responses generated productive discussion. This approach also helped introduce Latino project staff to the "culture of Extension" and provided ideas for staff training.

Benefits and accomplishments list. This list captured outcomes related to the project's goal of building Extension capacity for delivering Outreach programs and achieving access to Latino audiences. The list provided a cumulative perspective across project sites as well as the state level. The listed "benefits" included such things as expanded resources in state and county offices, new computers and technology provided by grant funds to build connectivity, and the staff development and training opportunities supported by the project budget. "Accomplishments" included the number of programs offered, the number of participants served, the number of hours contributed by volunteers, the titles of original materials produced, the occasions recognizing the newly-acquired expertise of staff and participating youth, the awards conferred on the project, and so on. The list had a bulleted format that succinctly communicated the "big picture." The Benefits and Accomplishments List was especially well-received by administrative staff and was particularly useful to show the value of the project before a substantial body of outcome data became available.

Portfolio materials. The Outreach project developed an extensive website that featured project philosophy, goals, objectives, materials, forms, descriptions of programs offered at project sites, evaluation findings and reports, papers prepared, and articles published. Also included were many photos of Latino youth involved in a variety of youth development activities.

Conclusion

This publication was written to present the experience and knowledge gained through the Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Project. There are many variables that enter into outreach; however, there also are generalizations that we feel can be made about the practice of reaching out to engage Latino youth and adults in 4-H. Knowing your audience well is critical to designing an approach that will work with your target audience. Our experience can inform your work, but it will not answer all your questions. Locally developed knowledge is of paramount importance. When in doubt, ask a Latino community member for his/her perspective on the matter at hand.

We hope the information shared here will encourage you to pursue Latino outreach and will offer insights that will help make your work successful. We also wish to assure you that the outcomes achieved from outreach make it well worth the undertaking. Most notable among outcomes identified as resulting from Oregon's 4-H Latino outreach efforts were:

▶ Latino youth and families embraced 4-H. Parents were thankful that 4-H had made the effort to make programs welcoming and accessible, thus helping families realize the better life for their children they hoped to achieve by immigrating to the U.S.

▶ Participants gained knowledge, skills, and increased access to the mainstream.

▶ 4-H/Extension expanded the diversity of its audience.

▶ 4-H staff represented greater diversity, both ethnically and racially.

▶ Existing 4-H members and leaders broadened their experience by working and learning with Latino youth and adults.

▶ 4-H staff experienced personal growth in skills and understanding.

▶ In many communities 4-H helped other organizations undertake or improve their outreach efforts to Latino youth and families.

Finally, it should be noted that Latino outreach enhances 4-H programs for all audiences. It creates a habit of being mindful about what we do, to be deliberate in the decisions that we make.

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Appendix

Outreach Programs and Activities

The Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Project does not have a set curriculum or preferred delivery methods. Program content is determined locally, depending on clientele interests and available resources. Listed below are examples of project programs and activities listed by content or delivery method. *Highlighted examples* are described more fully on the following pages.

▶ **Cultural arts and performance groups.** Folkloric dance groups (Mexican and Aztec), the 4-H Family Guitar Band, art clubs, a drama club

▶ **Soccer groups.** Teams and clubs, mostly middle school youth

▶ **Technology groups.** *4-H Tech Wizards* (web development, video and podcast production, GIS/GPS spatial technologies, Lego and Vex robotics, emerging technologies), videography workshops, family computer workshops, robotics clubs, digital photography clubs

▶ **Natural/environmental science clubs and activities.** *Equipo Verde* (stream restoration, service learning), *Weyerhaeuser Forestry Project* (forestry-related science, skills, careers), Equipo Adventura (local geography, natural resource activities for older youth), Kids & Bugs (stream health, aquatic insects, fly casting, for younger youth), Parents as Partners Elementary Science Club (animal and plant habitats, field trips, computer-assisted learning)

▶ **Special interest groups.** *Adventure Club* (travel, camping, teamwork, youth leadership), *WorldQuest*™ (global history, geography, current events, culture, language), Mothers and Daughters (personal development), community gardening (horticulture, marketing)

▶ **After school programs.** Elementary, middle, and high schools; age-appropriate activities, tutoring, and homework support; offered 1-4 days a week

▶ **Camps.** Day camps (1-15 days) and residential camps (3-5 days), including Junior Master Gardener Camp and *International Camps*

▶ **Exchanges.** Urban-rural exchanges involving Latino/Latino and Latino/Native American groups

▶ **Conferences.** Kaleidoscope (a project-sponsored event where nearly 150 high school students visited the OSU campus to learn about opportunities in higher education) and *Connecting Communities* (workshops and other activities were provided for over 180 professionals from community-based agencies and organizations interested in reaching out to Latino youth and families)

4-H Tech Wizards

4-H Tech Wizards was an after school/summer program that capitalized on youth interest in cutting edge science, engineering, and technology as a way to engage low-income Latino youth in (a) learning basic life and workforce skills and (b) aspiring to postsecondary education, productive jobs and careers, and community engagement. Through small group mentoring, youth developed skills in web development, video and podcast production, GIS/GPS spatial technologies, Lego and Vex robotics, and emerging technologies through real-world experiences related to jobs, careers, and service.

The real-world learning experiences included using GIS/GPS technology to map the locations of trained CERT (Community Emergency Response Team, a FEMA-approved di-

saster response certification) volunteers so the local fire department could identify areas where more training was needed. The youth also participated in CERT training and helped to transfer that knowledge to Spanish-speaking families and communities. Most recently, Tech Wizards used GIS/GPS to help their city locate, measure, and inventory 12,000 street trees to qualify as a "Tree City USA".

The 4-H Tech Wizards program began in Washington County, Oregon, one of the first sites involved in the Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Project. Major partners were Intel Oregon and Centro Cultural (a community resource center for Latinos). In nine years of delivery

▶ 95% of Tech Wizards completed at least two years of the three-year program and acquired proficiency in nearly 100 technological competencies.

▶ 85% annually accumulated 15 hours of service learning by applying their technological skills to real-world situations related to their technological learning.

▶ 95% graduated high school, nearly double the graduation rate of Latino students statewide.

▶ 70% pursued postsecondary education.

4-H Tech Wizards was designated as a National 4-H Program of Distinction in 2007 and presented an Annie E. Casey Family Strengthening Award in 2008. With the support of program staff, Tech Wizard youth made presentations at more than ten state, national, and international conferences. Most recently, a small group of Tech Wizards was invited to Santiago, Chile, where they taught 40 Chilean youth how to use GIS and presented a finished GIS/GPS project at the ESRI South American GIS-User Conference.

Adaptations of 4-H Tech Wizards have been successfully implemented in several other Oregon counties.

Equipo Verde (Green Team)

4-H in Washington County partnered with SOLV (a non-profit that provides volunteer opportunities for Oregonians to contribute to the livability of their communities) to offer Equipo Verde, an intensive after-school program focusing on watershed restoration and service learning.

High school youth gained a real world extension of their classroom education as they used a variety of web-based tools to assess the health of local watersheds, applied and maintained restoration techniques, and reported their findings and successes back to the community. Program content and fieldwork were tied to Oregon school educational standards and benchmarks in science, math, language arts, and career-related learning. Leadership skills were acquired in the process of outreach to families and the community as youth led a restoration activity for one of SOLV's scheduled events.

Following the completion of their project, 80% or more of the participating youth rated six benefits of service learning as "mostly true" or "very true" of their Equipo Verde experience (other choices were "somewhat", "a little", and "not at all" true.) The six benefits statements were: I learned more about my community, I helped make a difference in my community, I felt like I was doing something important, I developed more self confidence, I enjoyed sharing my knowledge with others, and I got some good experience for my resume.

4-H Weyerhaeuser Forestry Project

Several counties participated in forestry/natural resources educational programs supported by grants from the Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation. Programs engaged Latino youth in elementary, middle, and high school and addressed three major goals: (a) engage youth in learning experiences related to forestry/natural resources, (b) foster youth ap-

preciation of the natural environment, and (c) introduce youth to careers in forestry/natural resources and how to prepare for those careers. The programs were informal in nature and employed experiential learning strategies. On many occasions parents participated alongside their children. This was encouraged as parents play a key role in the educational and career choices their children make. Examples of project activities are described below.

In Benton County, a Latino forestry/natural resources club involved nearly equal numbers of youth and parents. Youth activities included supporting local efforts to develop sustainable wildlife habitat areas on school grounds (as part of the 4-H Wildlife Stewards Leadership Training) and planting trees to protect county wetlands. Two of these youth participated in the annual conference of the International Environmental Systems Research Institute. Additionally, youth participated in the International Summer Camps offered by 4-H and in the two-week Exxon Mobile 4-H SMILE Camp held on the campus of Oregon State University. Both of these programs offered additional science related experiences for youth.

Outreach staff in Clackamas County focused on working with high school youth through partnering with the Oregon Leadership Institute (OLI) at the local community college. The OLI was designed for Latino students of good standing who are enrolled in feeder schools to the college and who have expressed an interest in postsecondary education. The 4-H program provided these youth with opportunities to experience nature firsthand, learn about natural resources and their importance to society, and become informed about careers in forestry. Year-round activities included a series of meetings, workshops, field trips, tours, conferences, and field work where youth practiced forestry-related skills with the guidance of mentors, explored forestry careers, interacted with OSU faculty and industry professionals, and learned about preparing for college admission and the college experience.

In Jackson County, Equipo Aventura (Adventure Team) was an intensive program designed to involve high school students in natural resource activities and provide them with a greater sense of place in terms of local geography. The students met twice a week during the school year and took an overnight trip to Earth Teach Forest Park in the spring. The project was carried out in partnership with the Hispanic Academic Outreach (HAO) project of the Southern Oregon Educational Service District. Another group of older youth was trained to help organize and lead the annual one-day Kids & Bugs event. The weekly training sessions not only prepared the youth for leadership responsibilities, but encouraged them in pursuing higher education and exploring career possibilities in forestry and natural resources. Held at a wilderness park, Kids & Bugs most recently drew 86 Latino youth ages 6-15 for activities relating to stream health, aquatic insects, and fly casting. 4-H was one of many local organizations and agencies that worked together to sponsor and implement the event.

4-H Adventure Trips

4-H Adventure Trips, offered in Polk County, were 4-day excursions by bus to rather distant locations. The trips can best be described as traveling camps designed to (a) provide educational content, (b) create an inclusive community, and (c) offer opportunities for youth to develop and strengthen their leadership skills. Each day participants set up camp, prepared food, and spent the night in sleeping bags. In addition to seeing new territory, the daily agenda included visits to historical sites and other points of interest, as well as recreational opportunities.

Typically, the trips involved about twenty youth and ten youth leaders. For each trip, about half the youth were Latino and half were Anglo, half were girls and half were boys. Selection criteria for youth participants included involvement in 4-H during the previous year. Youth leaders were from the county's 4-H Ambassadors group, supplemented by Latino

youth who were considered to be good role models with leadership potential. The youth leaders began planning and preparing for the experience months in advance and took on numerous responsibilities under the guidance of outreach staff. Five or six Anglo and Latino adults accompanied the youth.

In an evaluation of Adventure Trips over time, campers reported that their trip had helped them "get better" at five life skills: making new friends, wanting to try new things, talking to people more easily, feeling good about themselves, and getting along with other people. (Each skill had a mean rating of 3.3 or above on a scale where 1=not at all, 2= some, 3=quite a bit, 4=a lot.) Youth leaders gave high ratings in terms of how the trips "helped them" to learn and practice leadership skills, learn more about taking on responsibilities, improve their skills in working with other people, experience enjoyment in learning new things and benefiting others, and make a positive difference in the lives of 4-Hers. (All were rated a mean of 3.5 or above on the 4-point scale.)

When parents were asked what their children had reported about their trip, typical comments were, "That it was very fun", "It was fun *and* educational", "They saw new places", "They remember highlights", and "They talk about the new people they met." Additionally, parents noted that "The trip was very much anticipated by the kids", "They don't get these opportunities from home", and "We'd like to have an adult trip!"

The mixing of cultures as part of the trip experience was characterized by a welcoming geniality that carried through to continuing involvement by Latino youth in other 4-H opportunities. The evaluation identified specific examples of Latino youth being integrated into other 4-H activities, such as various project clubs, record-keeping competition, and recognition programs.

WorldQuest™

A team of Latino 4-H members from Jackson County twice participated in the World-Quest Global Knowledge Competition held on the campus of Lewis and Clark College in Portland. The annual competition, sponsored by the World Affairs Council of Oregon, drew students from schools in Oregon and Southwest Washington to share their knowledge of history, geography, current events, culture, language, and related topics. The friendly competition also included a variety of cultural experiences, a chance to mingle with international students, and opportunities to meet business people visiting the U.S. from all over the world.

The team met with the local outreach coordinator in a series of eight weekly sessions held at a public library, scheduled individual consultations with the coordinator, met with an outside speaker, and studied independently. The group traveled together to the competition, a trip of nearly 300 miles that included visits to several places of interest. For most, it was their first trip to the Portland area.

In an evaluation survey conducted after the competition, nearly all of the participants reported that they had increased their knowledge of history, geography, and current events "a lot" through their participation in WorldQuest™ activities. (Other response choices were "quite a bit", "some", and "not at all".) Additionally, more than half of the participants reported they had learned "a lot" of study skills that they could use in school and that their school performance had improved as a result of their WorldQuest™. They also reported substantial gains in their ability to consider different points of view, as well as greater confidence in their ability to learn.

International Summer Camps

One or more multi-county International Summer Camps were held annually at the Oregon 4-H Center beginning in 2004. The camps were designed to provide a supportive environment that reflected Latino culture while

youth continued to develop understanding, skills, and confidence that allowed them to successfully relate to the larger mainstream culture. Professionals from universities, private businesses, and community organizations provided a varied menu of workshops. A robust schedule of sports activities and traditional camp events rounded out the program.

The two camps for elementary school and middle school students included workshops and activities relating to technology, natural resources, engineering, nutrition, music, and dance. The middle school camp also focused on helping youth understand the importance of education and encouraged them to finish high school and plan for postsecondary education. In end-of-camp surveys, middle school campers consistently gave the camp high marks for life skill development (such as trying new things, cooperating with others, talking to others more easily, being responsible, and working as a team), as well as for learning related to program content. Parents commented that their children returned home with many positive memories of the camp, including an increased interest in looking at various careers and continuing their education after high school.

The camp for high school students featured a more intense focus on planning for postsecondary education. At the end of camp, a substantial majority of the participants reported feeling more strongly convinced about the importance of higher education in preparing for a job or career, significantly more positive about their opportunities for going to a college or university, and "a lot" more knowledgeable about what is involved in planning for higher education.

Connecting Communities Conference:
Reaching out to Latino youth and families

The Connecting Communities Conference, organized and sponsored by the Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Project, was held on the Oregon State University campus in October 2008. The conference goals were

▶ to offer information that would help professionals interact effectively and equitably with Latino youth and their families and build long-term relationships with diverse Latino communities

▶ to provide opportunities for professionals to network around issues of Latino outreach

The two-day conference contained a mix of general (3) and concurrent (20) sessions. Concurrent sessions addressed one of four conference themes: Latino culture, key elements of successful Latino outreach, accessing community supports, and examples of successful Latino outreach programs. A total of 43 presenters drawn from institutions of higher education and from community-based organizations contributed their time and expertise. The conference provided an affordable venue for those who serve the public to increase their knowledge and understanding of issues within the Latino community and how they might engage Latinos in community-based programs. Over 180 professionals attended the conference.

The formal conference evaluation yielded strong ratings both on conference quality and what was learned. It was particularly notable that when asked "How likely is it that you will use something you learned at the conference in your work in the six months?" 96% of respondents said "very likely" or "somewhat likely".