



Broadening Young People's Horizons With Summer Camp

Impact Statement

The Problem/Issue:

Alabama's current population between the ages of 5 and 18 is approximately 1 million or 26 percent of the state's total population. 4-H is the land grant system's youth organization whose mission is to help young people explore interests and expand awareness of the world in which they live while providing guidance in developing a sense of purpose, direction and accomplishment.

What's Been Done:

One program method to achieve this goal is the summer camping program. The summer camping program has provided group living opportunities for young people to explore their interests and begin to realize their full potential under the supervision of caring and committed adults and trained camp counselors. Since 1993, almost 16,000 youth have made new friends while participating in hands-on, minds-on camp programs at the Alabama 4-H Center. In 2003, almost 1,000 youth and chaperones from 46 counties as well as two neighboring states participated in a variety of activities that offered positive learning experiences in an outdoor setting. Team work, leadership, discipline and confidence building were the hidden outcomes of fun activities such as canoeing, rock climbing and archery.

Why We Care:

While youth are at an impressionable age, they need numerous opportunities to develop their self image, social graces and decision making abilities as they explore their full potential. These opportunities should not stop when the school year ends. Instead, relaxed settings such as summer camps can offer the opportunity to develop these character traits while teaching youth such recreational skills as canoeing, rock climbing and swimming that they can enjoy throughout their lives.

