

# Empowering Youth as Leaders Through Trainings

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MultiCounty

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4-H & Youth

Youth leaders that can motivate their peers and lead by example will make the youth group stronger and more effective. However, many youth do not receive training in this area through school curriculum and school experiences. By facilitating Certified Teen Leader Training for youth in Southeast Georgia, 4-H faculty were not only able to educate and empower youth to become peer leaders and mentors to others, but also aided in building soft skills among

Youth need opportunities to practice and assume leadership roles (Connell, Gambone, & Smith, 1998). This practice contributes to the development of providing youth with the opportunities to lead to adulthood and contributing adulthood. As P(2000) notes active engagement in organizations is declining in younger generations. In providing youth the opportunity to become active and engaged as leaders in their program where their voices are a part of decision making, Georgia 4-H contribute to leadership development and in meeting its mission. According to Arnold (2018), youth see helping others as a personal responsibility and live up to the values of respect, responsibility, honesty, kindness, and generosity. Youth care about and give back to their communities. Youth who achieve positive developmental outcomes are more likely to achieve long-term outcomes marked by vocational or academic success, civic engagement, employability and economic stability, happiness, and wellbeing (Arnold & Gagnon, 2020).

Of the many opportunities Georgia 4-H offers, the ability to develop leadership skills has been acknowledged as one of the most positive experiences within the organization. The opportunity for more experienced 4-Hers to mentor younger 4-Hers by serving as Certified Teen Leaders in their county program, as well as district and state events, through sharing the



build strong relationships with younger youth as they assist Extension Faculty in coordinating and implementing the educational components of these activities while putting into practice the leadership skills they learn. Agents with youth that participated in this training were asked to provide insight regarding the importance of Certified Leaders within their programs.

- ^d Leaders are a great way to get younger students excited for leadership opportunities in the future! Younger students are always eager to be just like our older students who serve in afterschool clubs as teen leaders or those that attend camp as a teen leader! We rely on the leadership skills to successfully implement numerous programs.
- ^ Our Cloverleaf Officer Training, one of our grade 4-6 programs, gave me the opportunity to tell a parent and a student who is really just starting their journey about the opportunities offered in the program.
- ^d Leaders are extremely important to the Bulloch County program because they often serve as the connector between Cloverleaf youth and adult leaders. They are often more relevant to the cloverleaf group and can serve as a tremendous source of encouragement.
- ^d Leaders are vital to the McIntosh County program. With only one staff member in the county program, teen leaders are a valuable extension of the staff leader. The teen leader role is a wonderful tool to keep our older students involved in the program and inspire our younger students to stick with it as they reach middle and high school.

Based on this feedback, it is clear that this program not only has value to the students that participate but to their home programs as well.