Proposal: 3450

Leadership Summit: Hike Your Leadership Trail

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Abstract (150 words)
This clever and fun nationally recognized program (2019 Denise Miller National 4-H Innovator Award Winner) is a youth leadership program which engages youth by utilizing a colorful trail map and hiking icons to represent personality categories. Hands-on activities unfold as youth figuratively ‘hike up the trail’ to the ‘summit’ while gaining leadership skills. These activities focus on listening, verbal communication and teamwork. It has been adapted for school enrichment and after school lessons. This inclusive program gives opportunity for all students to learn what it takes to be a good leader, even those who never thought they could lead. Participation helps youth identify strengths, put them to use to become an effective leader and seeing the value of building a diverse team. At a critical time when middle school students choose to take the wrong ‘trail’ in life, this program helps prepare them to be tomorrow’s leaders and role models.

Poster Session
Yes

Check if proposals is from an NAE4-HYDP Committee

If from a PLWG Committee or Task Force, please identify

Identification of 4-H 2025 Vision area
Power of Youth, Access, Equity, and Opportunity, Extraordinary People, Innovative Practices, Effective Organizational Systems
Description of session outcomes

Participants will be introduced to Nebraska’s Leadership Summit: Hike Your Leadership Trail leadership development program which targets middle school youth. Through a condensed, but detailed overview of the Leadership Summit program, participants will be able to develop an understanding of the program in the field day format. ‘Hiker’ attendees will gather at ‘Basecamp’ and begin one of the ‘Leadership Discovery’ activities by taking the personality temperament assessment. Next along the hike, they will stop off at several trail markers (break-out sessions) where they will participate in hands-on communication activities and team building lessons just as the youth would experience them. In addition to the field day format, Leadership Summit is adaptable for school enrichment and after school time frames.

Leadership Summit aligns with the 4-H 2025 Vision strategic plan:

· Power of Youth - giving youth leadership skills to be partners in their own success during their school years, in their career and effectively engaging in their communities.

· Access, Equity, and Opportunity – through school partnerships, allowing each student opportunity to attend this program not just for the classmates who are already identified as leaders. Having this new program available for Extension 4-H professionals to bring into schools with a nationally mandated issue, creates more opportunity for youth reach.

· Extraordinary Opportunities to Learn / Innovative Practices / Effective Organizational Systems – through the clever, fun and innovative hiking theme and engaging activities, youth have an unforgettable learning experience shown by evaluation data. Facilitators and volunteers are provided with turn-key, detailed resources and training videos so they are well-trained.

Partnerships with community leaders as volunteers and capstone speakers, build impact through this program and increase positive community visibility.
Program description

Leadership Summit: Hike Your Leadership Trail is an innovative program by Nebraska Extension which directly targets 5th and 6th grade students’ leadership development. Prior to the development of Leadership Summit in 2018, there was no specific leadership development program for middle school youth in Nebraska. Leadership Summit is designed as a six-hour, field day experience where youth leave the typical school day setting to discover their leadership potential. Youth complete a short personality assessment, which was adapted from Leadership Road Trip by The Ohio State University and research based content adapted from Stanford University’s YELL (Youth Engaged in Leadership and Learning) program. The development team gained permission from the authors of Leadership Road Trip to adapt the personality assessment for Leadership Summit which helps youth identify with one of four groups; Hiking Boot, Compass, First Aid Kit, or Trail Mix. Participants spend time discovering their personal values and strengths through small group activities. Youth debrief to help them gain insight as to what makes them unique and how these traits affect their leadership style.

The afternoon begins with an activity where youth are given a playing card with limited instructions that inform behavior relative to card value. Youth interact and reflect on their experience and determine their card’s value. Debriefing questions highlight topics including kindness, inclusion and bullying as they relate to the character of an aspiring leader. This activity sets the stage for the remaining break out sessions which allow youth to experience teamwork challenges. Each session provides time for debriefing to connect back to the unique characteristics each individual discovered in the morning session and how each individual may use their strengths to contribute to group efforts. Finally, the group reconvenes for a celebration at the ‘summit’, modeling the call for celebrations of success found in exemplary leadership.

Presentation of evaluation evidence to support program effectiveness

Since piloting began in 2018, Leadership Summit: Hike Your Leadership Trail has reached over 1,100 youth through field day experiences, school enrichment and out of school time programming activities.

In 2019, the Leadership Summit program was taught to 835 youth across Nebraska. Youth evaluations of the program have reported 61% of youth are able to see themselves as a leader after their hike to the Leadership Summit. This is a 28% increase in post program evaluation data when compared to the 33% youth reported before participating in Leadership Summit. Prior to the program, 58% of youth thought they could get along with others. Post program evaluation shows 84% of youth reported they are able to get along with others, a 26% increase. Quantitative and qualitative data show the benefits of participating in the Leadership Summit program. Youth and teacher testimonials share the experiences of participants:

“After the workshop, I am going to look harder at situations and try to see other ways of dealing (other than my own). I will choose to treat people with respect and try and see them from their perspectives. I will reflect on the information presented to be a better leader. Thank you for a fabulous day!”

“I will consider other people’s ideas. I will make sure people stay on task. I will be a leader and help with teamwork.” - Youth Participant

“It was a great day! I loved the activities and information. The kids were engaged in the learning. I had the impression that they were actually enjoying themselves.” 6th Grade Teacher
Description of how program can be replicated by others

Through a partnership with the Dean of Nebraska Extension, the development team was able to expand programming beyond the pilot stage. By obtaining special funding from the Dean of Nebraska Extension, the Leadership Summit development team was able to create four additional turn-key supply kits strategically placed across the state of Nebraska for Extension professionals to use when facilitating Leadership Summit. Kits included supplies for all of the leadership activities, signage, and banners to facilitate the field day experience. An online Box file was created where all lessons, training videos and activity files are housed. This allows for easy sharing of resources and materials. The development team has hosted two training events for a total of 50 Nebraska Extension Professionals. Attendees were guided through the field day experience by participating in the activities as if they were a middle school youth participant. The Leadership Summit resources have been advertised to clientele through a statewide 4-H volunteer newsletter. This program has also been presented and shared at the Nebraska Afterschool Conference to a statewide group of afterschool professionals. The program can easily be replicated in other county 4-H programs through the creation of additional kits, sharing of program resources, materials, and lessons. Leadership Summit targets any 5th or 6th grade student and could be adapted to go one grade higher or lower. A timeline for replication of the Leadership Summit program could move very fast. Once presenters are trained, and have obtained all the necessary lessons and supply lists, it is up to them to plan and facilitate their first Leadership Summit field day experience.
Outline of plan for teaching the program’s replication to session participants

Session participants will experience a condensed field day experience and will be able to understand activities, assessments and ask questions at any time.

Introduction and Leadership Discovery
Personality Assessment: Each participant will take the short personality temperament assessment
Group debrief: Participants will gather in their corresponding groups (Hiking Boots, Trail Mix, Compass, First Aid Kit) and create a poster displaying their needs, joys, values, and strengths as a group. Each group shares with the entire group to learn about similarities and differences in all leaders.

Cards of value: Each participant will be given a playing card and specific instructions. Each participant will hold their card on top of their head and treat others based off their card ‘value.’ This is debriefed with a conversation about how well we treat others - an important conversation for leaders.

Trail Head Hands-on sessions
Teamwork Tightrope Activity: Small groups work together to move a tennis ball along strands of string so it lands in the center ring.
Look out and Listen Activity: Small groups attempt to listen to hiking stories as they move craft sticks multiple directions revealing the concept that multi-tasking cannot take place during effective listening.
Tower building Activity: Small groups learn to work together and carefully communicate as they build the tallest possible tower.

Celebration at the Summit: Questions and sharing of resources. Adaptations for school enrichment and after-school formats.
### Speakers/Presenters

**Presenters**

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### Reviewer

Yes