



## **Youth Development** **Teen Leadership Camp**



**Group of teens working together to complete a challenge during the Wacky Olympic Games.**

### **Inspired Leadership**

At Teen Leadership Camp we work hard to be different. We focus on leading from where you are, empowering leaders around you, and having the courage to move outside your comfort zone to be a leader for something you believe in. This year, camp's theme was inspired leadership. One youth shared that they learned "you don't have to be popular to be successful and follow your dreams." Youth were asked to think about ideas that inspired them to make a change or be a leader. During this activity, youth learned the importance of "following what you want to, not what the group is doing." They were challenged to discover their purpose. Youth practiced acceptance and authenticity in a fun, outdoor setting. Evaluations indicated that 85% of the youth recognized their own value as a leader after attending TLC. We provide opportunity for youth to learn more about themselves so they can work more effectively with those around them.

TLC is a multi-county leadership camp hosted in Wheatland County. Wheatland County Extension Agent Mandie Reed, Wheatland County Sheriff's Deputy Sheila Crow and volunteer Jean Wallace serve as directors of the camp. In its third year, we

developed a framework for the camp focusing on developing resilience in middle-school-aged youth with a focus on leadership skills. The framework is for three years of camp and provides structure and goals for each year. The years build and reinforce skills, and are powerful in themselves. The camp helps middle-school-aged youth develop leadership skills and resiliency before they enter high school.

Counselors are high school students who apply and interview for their position. They begin planning camp in December and continue to meet and plan through the school year. They practice leadership skills by working as a team to vision, select a theme for camp, and develop the workshops. Sometimes they teach, sometimes they invite others to help them. TLC counselors work in partnership with the camp directors to develop everything from the menu to the advertisement and recruiting campers. One counselor share that "I learned that I have reached the point where kids are beginning to look up to me and I want to be a good role model so they will continue to inspire kids when they are older." "That is our goal, for counselors to feel ownership in the camp and empowered in their role as leaders in the community," commented Extension Agent Mandie Reed.



**Taking a break during TLC and playing an intense game of follow the leader.**

# Community Development

## Harlowton Theater Project

The Harlowton Theater Project began in 2000 as a school to work project through Harlowton High School. The movie theater is operated as a business by a committee of high school students. The students manage supplies, advertising, schedule the workers, who are other students, and schedule the movies. Students learn communication skills, responsibility, and leadership while working at the theater. One student who served as general manager shared that “as an adult, I am constantly using the skills I learned at the Harlowton Theater project.”

The committee asked MSU Extension to assist them in updating their business plan and evaluating their profit and losses for the year. Extension Agent Mandie Reed decided to use the appreciative inquiry process to help the students evaluate their business. The positive approach allowed the students to feel more empowered and excited about this huge task, rather than overwhelmed.

In the first phase, students identified what they loved about the theater and what they felt was working really well. This was easy for the students, because the Theater is so important to them. It was interesting to see how much they all had in common. These comments became the core values of the theater and served as a check point as they continued through the process and made decisions. The group was able to easily agree on what they identified through the first phase.

In the next phases, students spent time dreaming about what the theater could be, and identifying ways they could make those dreams realities. Finally, students decided on a few items they wanted to implement and the ideas they wanted to save for the future.

Shortly after completing the process, the committee was notified that movie companies were no longer going to make movies on 35 mm format and the theater would have to upgrade to digital projection or close. The upgrade had been a project identified during the appreciative inquiry process, but one they had decided to table. It quickly was moved to the top of the priority

list. The upgrade would cost the theater close to \$50,000. The theater committee has worked hard to keep the cost to attend the movies low so that all families in Harlowton can enjoy the theater. There seemed to be no way to raise the needed funds through sales.

The information the committee had gathered during their planning process allowed them to aggressively fundraise and write grants to raise the money. They had already identified why the Theater was important to them personally and as a committee. The committee was ready to meet with funders and speak knowledgeably about their business and their plans for the future. The community showed unprecedented support for the fundraising efforts. Wheatland County Extension worked closely with the Theater Project Coordinator, Kim Misner to write and submit grant applications.

The committee successfully raised more than \$90,000 through private donations and grant support to upgrade the projector, replace the screen and secure the theater for upcoming generations of high school students.



Managers at Harlowton Theater Project standing behind the candy counter after meeting with Larry Callant, Callant Foundation.



## 4-H Afterschool

Wheatland County Extension is a strong partner in providing afterschool programming with Hillcrest Elementary School in Harlowton. The Harlowton Advantage Program for Youth (H.A.P.Y) is a free afterschool program that offers homework help, an afterschool snack, and enrichment activities in a safe and caring environment. Wheatland County Extension received a Montana Out of School Time grant to fund H.A.P.Y with 4-H. Wheatland County Extension provides experiential learning activities based on 4-H projects one afternoon each week during the program. H.A.P.Y served an average of 45 youth each week and provided 92 hours of afterschool programs. The program focus was helping students make healthy choices regarding food and nutrition, working in teams and personal relationships, and health and exercise. The students really engaged in the team building activities and began to work cooperatively. Many of the students were excited about the types of activities and have joined the afterschool 4-H club the Lucky Leprechauns.



Students in the Lucky Leprechauns 4-H club made 12 bird houses and set up a blue bird trail with the help of Tom Anderson from the Montana Blue Bird Association.



4-Her getting her 4-H hogs ready for the livestock show.

## Wheatland County 4-H Program

Wheatland County 4-H offers youth between the ages 9-18 opportunities for leadership development, personal growth, and skill mastery in a safe, caring environment. The program is possible because of caring adult volunteers who help provide opportunities. Youth today have many options to fill their time. Why do they choose 4-H?

1. Opportunity to engage in leadership development at a county, regional and state level. Wheatland County 4-Hers attended five regional and state leadership development events in 2012-2013 year. At these events, youth had the opportunity to enhance and practice their leadership skills and teach workshops to other youth. 4-H provides the opportunity for youth to make a difference in their community.
2. Safe place to belong. Youth are encouraged to explore projects, learn new skills, and continue to develop. 4-Hers have the opportunity to be themselves, meet new people and make new friends in a safe environment.
3. Caring adult youth partnerships. Youth have the opportunity to engage in learning activities with adults who care and value their input.
4. Learn life skills while having a great time.



4-Hers participate in annual demonstration day where they practice their speaking skills.

## Wheatland County 4-H Hosting the President



On June 27, 2013 Wheatland County 4-Hers had the opportunity to host MSU President Cruzado and her Executive Council during the “Follow the Beef Tour”. The 4-Hers made us all proud and represented MSU Extension, 4-H, and Wheatland County with the utmost professionalism. They greeted executive guests and graciously served dinner. 4-H club president Amanda Martin welcomed the distinguished group, and each 4-Her shared comments about what 4-H means to them. One member commented that this was “the best thing I have even done in 4-H.”

Wheatland County 4-H members with MSU President Cruzado and her Executive Council

### Contact Us



**EXTENSION**

**Wheatland County**

**[www.msuextension.org](http://www.msuextension.org)**

Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA Veteran's Preference Employer and provider of educational outreach.

**Mandie Reed**  
Wheatland County Extension Agent

**Wheatland County Extension**  
201 A Ave, PO Box 733, Harlowton MT 59036

Phone (406) 632-4728

E-mail [reed@montana.edu](mailto:reed@montana.edu)