

# impact

of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences



## Economic Development and Quality of Life for People and Communities Arizona 4-H Teen Road Trip

### Issue

Retention and recruitment of teen members in 4-H is a problem nationwide. When asked what would help recruit new teens and keep current members in 4-H, the Maricopa County 4-H Teen Association suggested a road trip like the one on MTV. The rationale was that with multiple parents in the workforce, many families cannot afford the cost or time to take family vacations. Youth have become accustomed to being able to attend affordable 4-H events where they have made friends, learned valuable skills and had fun.

### What has been done?

Arizona 4-H Road Trip is an invitational opportunity for teens aged 13-18, sponsored by the Maricopa County 4-H teen program and UA Cooperative Extension. Begun in 2001, the trip takes place "on the road" throughout a chosen region of Arizona and surrounding states in July. Activities promote communal living, trust-building, exploration, personal responsibility, interactive and interpersonal skill development and problem solving. Teenagers of various backgrounds gather from five Arizona counties to engage in the five components of the Road Trip: interactive geography/history lessons;

service learning; work force/career exploration; cultural/diversity awareness and appreciation; and technology in action. Participants develop a strong sense of teamwork and community, learn to adapt to new situations, learn how to live and work with others, participate in new activities and function as a working youth/adult partnership team. Conflict resolution, relationship building and trust skills create the "road trip community", promoting and strengthening participants' abilities to thrive in various situations and environments.

Participants photographed sites during the trip and worked with a 4-H agent to download them to the web site and in the form of electronic postcards. Anyone with access to the Internet could follow the trip, interact via e-mails and ask questions of the group. At least two hours per night were spent creating a traveling camp so other teens and interested parties could experience a "virtual" Arizona road trip. See [www.arizona.edu/4-H/roadtrip/](http://www.arizona.edu/4-H/roadtrip/)

### Impact

In only its second year, the camp grew from 12 participants to 25 - a large size group for the intensive experience created by road travel of over 1000

miles. Participants of "Road Trip II - Five Hundred Years of Exploration" showed an increase in knowledge, aspirations, skills and attitude in the following: ability to live and work with others - 21.5 percent; ability to accept responsibilities -15.1 percent; willingness to try new things - 28.2 percent ; leadership skills and abilities - 16.5 percent; ability to make new friends 15.5 percent; ability to trust others 20 percent; ability to logically solve problems in a group 16.2 percent; adapt to new situations - 25.5 percent; and to participate in new activities and challenges -27 percent. Fifty percent of the 2002 participants were returning for their second time to Road Trip.

"It's 4-H - it's all about making friends. And on the road trip, even though some people didn't like each other in the beginning, they finally realized, 'Hey, I'm stuck with them for the rest of the trip!'" And eventually, everyone was best friends." - Road Trip II participant

"Teen Road Trip is a fun opportunity to learn about different cultures/ diversities, people and situations. Fun, exciting, interesting and educational all in one!" - Road Trip II participant

### Funding

University of Arizona Cooperative Extension  
Private registrations

### Contact

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