

# 2016 Youth Leadership Conference Report

## Strengthening Young Leaders, Teaching New Life Skills, and Celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 4-H in Haiti!

Overall, the 2016 4-H Youth Leadership Conference was a huge success! It's safe to say that the conference will be etched in the hearts and minds of both participants and volunteers for years to come! Words cannot adequately express the learning and joy that took place, but I will try to offer a glimpse of what the week entailed.

The main components of the four-day conference included guest speakers, leadership seminars, breakout workshops, and recreation.

We were able to find some awesome locals to deliver inspiring keynote messages to the youth. A medical student alumni organization (SMAH) spoke on leadership and public health. Samuel, one of our translators, who also happens to be an international relations student at a university, gave a talk about leadership and communication skills. Finally, Ugentz, a 4-H member, delivered an encouraging message about the history of 4-H in Haiti, its mission and purpose, and how 4-H serves as a catalyst for youth to improve their communities. All in all, we couldn't have been more satisfied with our speakers!



Each day, participants spent an hour and a half in leadership seminars to dive deeper into the daily leadership topics. Youth stayed with the same small group and leaders for the entire week so that a sense of collegiality and trust could be developed. On the first day, youth were asked to brainstorm qualities of a leader. Then, working in small groups, they created and performed skits to illustrate what these various traits DO and DO NOT look like. Everyone got a good laugh over the “non-examples” that groups came up with! On day two, youth completed an inventory to learn what their

personal leadership style is and we discussed how there are many different types of leaders (which is a valuable thing!). The third day was all about effective communication. Participants did a variety of communication exercises, such as a blindfolded partner drawing and a blindfolded obstacle course.

These games were fun and created a lot of laughter, but carried an important message about giving clear and detailed directions, asking questions, and building trust as a leader. On the final day, we gave participants an opportunity to share about what they had learned, what they liked about the conference, how they became a stronger leader, and what they planned to take back and share with their clubs. Their feedback tells of a powerful and impactful week of learning and fun!



Throughout the conference, participants had a chance to attend two different breakout sessions each day. These workshops were facilitated by both Haitian and American volunteers. I'm please to say that we were able to offer 21 different sessions! Our workshop topics included: photography; jewelry; engineering; conversational English; card-making; gardening; sewing; juggling; tours of the local hospital; public health/leadership; embroidery; rocketry; crocheting; conflict resolution; cross stitch;

group games; cooking; first aid; mop-making; child development; and leadership. The hardest part for the youth was choosing their classes- they wanted to attend them all!



We dedicated the last day of the conference to celebrating accomplishments, community service, and recreation. Participants spent some time cleaning up the grounds of the technical college where we hosted the conference. Then we held a closing ceremony, in which we awarded certificates to participants and gave out club grants for the year. Finally, we ended the day, and the conference, with a talent show. Youth and adults performed songs, dances, skits, and instrumental acts. It was the perfect way to wrap up the week!

The conference took many hands and tireless effort to make it a success! I can't say thank you enough to those who contributed, both large and small! Thank you to our planning committee, volunteers, translators, VIP board members, and all the 4-H groups and civic

organizations around the state that invited us to your meetings. A special thank-you to Dodge, Washington, and Ozaukee county 4-H programs for your incredibly generous sponsorships! Thank you to all the individuals and groups that donated money and supplies towards the conference. United in our efforts, we have truly accomplished so much! THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!



FUN FACTS- By the numbers:

- 5 translators
- 8 Ventures in People volunteers
- 21 workshop offerings
- 96 participants representing 26 clubs
- 200+ hours of planning
- 480 lunches served
- 32,000 miles collectively flown