

# Impact

Sharing the difference CSU Extension makes in people's lives and their communities.

## Study of Colorado 4-H Alumni Demonstrates the Importance of 4-H

A significant finding of this study suggests that participation in the 4-H program was the second greatest influence on the lives of the young people involved in it—second only to family influences.

### Issue

The benefits of the 4-H program in Colorado have historically been communicated through anecdotal evidence and personal success stories. This type of information typically reflected the quality of the programs through the feelings of those familiar with 4-H, but did not demonstrate the public value of 4-H in quantifiable measures.

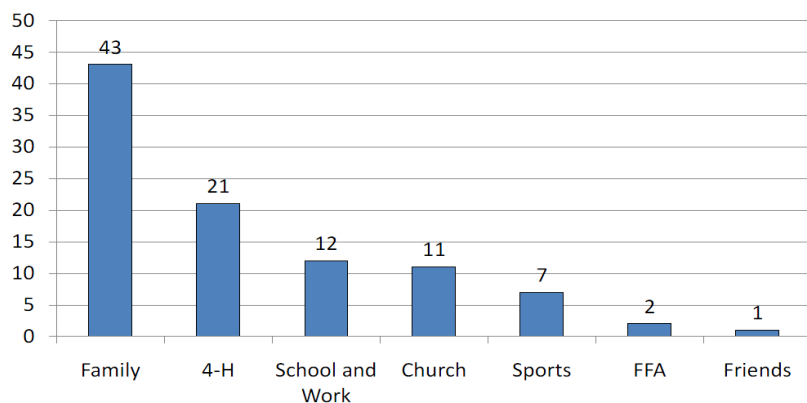
### Extension's Response

In the Fall of 2008, data were collected in 35 randomly selected counties. A total of 1,750 questionnaires were distributed to Colorado 4-H alumni and non-4-H alumni. Two hundred and eighty-three Colorado 4-H alumni and 55 non-4-H alumni participated in this survey. Participants were asked to indicate the highest educational level completed.

Colorado State University graduate student Marcella Talamante completed a study in the spring of 2009 to explore and measure the impact of the Colorado 4-H Youth Development Program as perceived by Colorado 4-H alumni. The population of interest for this study was Colorado 4-H alumni (ages 25-45) who were enrolled in the Colorado 4-H Youth Development Program for a minimum of one year between 1973 and 1993.

### Impact

#### Area of Influence Mean Score (%)



Colorado State University Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Colorado counties cooperating.  
Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. August 2010.

*"I was encouraged to grow and improve in all my endeavors and was taught the importance of using my abilities to help others. 4-H was a big part of my formative years, and I will always be grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a great organization."*

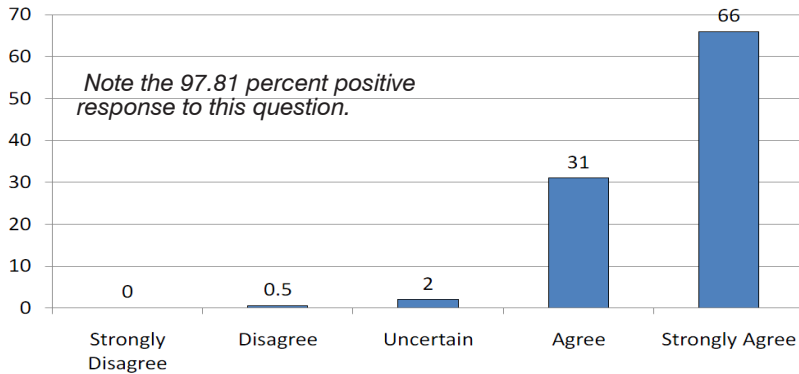
– Bazi Kanani

NBC 9News Anchor,  
Denver

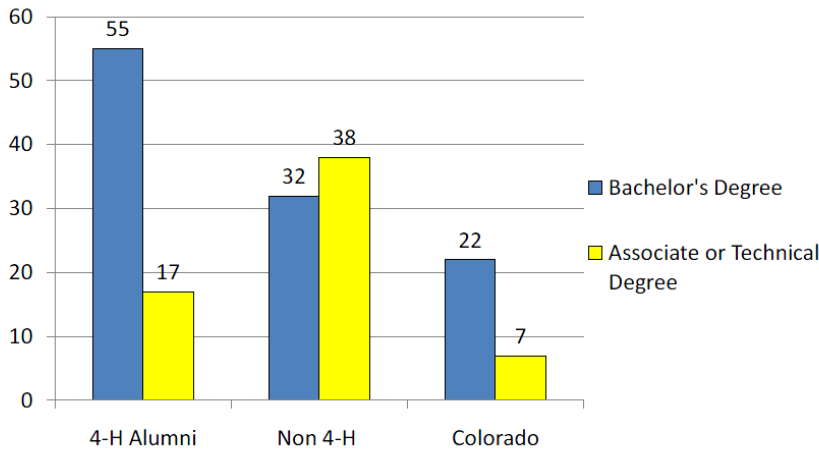
### The Bottom Line

As shown on the chart (left), family had the highest mean score of 43 percent, followed by 4-H with a mean of 21 percent. School and work (12 percent) and church (11 percent) followed as did sports (7 percent), FFA (2 percent), and friends (1 percent). This is a significant finding of this study. It suggests that participation in the 4-H program was the second greatest influence on the lives of the young people involved in it—more than school, work, church, sports, or friends.

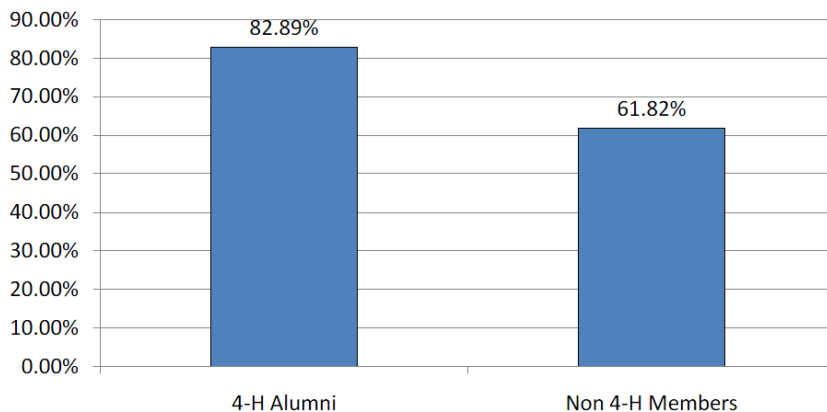
## Knowledge and skills gained through 4-H have benefited me as an adult (%)



## Highest Educational Attainment (%)



## 4-H Alumni volunteer more than non-4-H members



4-H is a community of young people across Colorado learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. One hundred years of research-based programs and experience bear significant results. Research shows that youth involved in 4-H are more likely to develop the "five C's" (competence, confidence, character, caring and connection). Through participation in 4-H programs, youth are more likely to be at the highest level of contribution in their communities.

### 4-H Compared to Other Influences

4-H alumni were asked to indicate the relative impact they believed 4-H had on their life as compared to influences from family, school, church, friends, and participation in other youth organizations.

### Overall Impact of 4-H

Participants who were 4-H alumni were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "Knowledge and skills gained through 4-H has benefited me as an adult." Data drawn from the questionnaire to reflect the answer to this question is represented in the first graph to the left.

### Educational Attainment

All 4-H respondents reported completing high school while a majority (55.7 percent) of 4-H respondents reported completing a bachelor's degree followed by 17 percent who had received an associate's or technical degree. Comparatively, 38.2 percent of non-4-H respondents completed an associate's or technical degree followed by 32.7 percent who had completed a bachelor's degree. The data for the state of Colorado for the same age group is also compared in the following second graph to the left.

### Effect of 4-H Membership on Volunteering

Assessment of continuing civic engagement by 4-H alumni is a long-term impact of the program. Participants were asked if they are or have in the past volunteered for a youth-serving organization.

Nearly 62 percent of non-4-H responses reported being involved in volunteering activities while 82.9 percent of 4-H respondents are or have volunteered for youth-serving organizations. (left)

### For more information contact

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