

## Reaching Out to Hispanic Youth

The growing Hispanic youth population in Page County traditionally has not attended events sponsored by Iowa State University Extension, but that is changing. During 2004-2005, ISU Extension county youth coordinator, Debbie Swanson, prepared and delivered five programs at a local Hispanic Center in Shenandoah, targeting youth ranging in age from six to 10 years of age. Attendance generally averaged approximately 10 youngsters, and the children often were accompanied by their mothers. Swanson used many of the same resource materials routinely used in traditional 4-H clubs around the state, such as visual design, rocketry, health, nutrition, safety and others.

Through her involvement with the Hispanic Center, Swanson was later asked to provide an exhibit at a local Hispanic Health Fair and to involve some of the children and youth attending in mentored activities. Dawn Hough, a program assistant with Extension's Growing Strong Families program, accompanied her on one occasion to meet with Hispanic mothers and see if any wanted to enroll in the GSF program. Several did.



*Page County Extension has used 4-H resource materials to reach a growing Hispanic youth population with basic life skills information.*

Swanson's efforts to establish basic name recognition and trust eventually led to increased requests from the local Hispanic community for programming and services provided by Page County Extension. Recently, Swanson took a group of Hispanic youngsters and their mothers on a tour of a nearby Page County farm where they got an up-close and personal look at farm animals and equipment, while also learning about farm safety. Most had never visited a farm before.

Another result came this past summer when there was a significant upturn in Hispanic enrollment in Extension-sponsored youth camping activities and in community 4-H clubs.

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To learn more about this and other Iowa State University Extension programs and services, contact Heidi Carter, [heidic@iastate.edu](mailto:heidic@iastate.edu), Page County Extension Education Director, or Debbie Swanson, [debra@iastate.edu](mailto:debra@iastate.edu), Page County Youth Coordinator, at 712-542-5171, or visit the ISU Extension website at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/>.

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