

Teen Volunteerism On The Rise

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — A recent Gallup Poll blasts the notion that teenagers spend hours after school yakking on the phone or blaring the stereo. In reality, many devote several hours a week to church, school or community service.

"This survey showed teens volunteering at the same rate as adults or higher," says Dr. Robert Lewis, professor of 4-H youth in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences. "In 1989, 58 percent of American teens volunteered, compared with 54 percent of adults."

Teens reported getting involved in areas of art, culture, and humanities (78 percent), education (74 percent), human services (55 percent) and environmental causes (52 percent).

While parents unconsciously may influence students to volunteer, the 14- to 17- year-olds who responded to the survey said the stimulus came from extracurricular activities (79 percent), schools (52 percent) and churches (50 percent).

Among the most important of these extracurricular activities is 4-H, says Lewis. "The 4-H program in Pennsylvania and across the nation encourages young people to be leaders in their communities," he says.

"In 4-H, we recognize that teens have a great capacity for learning," he says. "They respond quickly to new ideas and opportunities for service. Teens also want a role in solving social, economic and political problems. They need a creative outlet for their energy." Through 4-H leadership programs, teens learn about planning and conducting programs and communicating effectively with a variety of audiences. At annual retreats and events such as Capital Days, they learn about citizenship and working within the political system to make a difference.

As a result of 4-H leadership development, many teens become involved in outreach programs for troubled youths, neighborhood crime watch programs, and community health care and beautifica-

tion programs.

"In 4-H, we even see kids inspiring their parents to become involved and serve as volunteer leaders," Lewis says.

According to another Gallup Poll, adult volunteerism increased almost 10 percent from 1988 to 1990. Many credit President Bush's "Thousand Points of Light" message as inspiration. Others say budget cuts for social programs have prompted concerned individuals to devote their time and attention towards solving problems such as child abuse, homelessness and alcoholism.

Whatever the reason, volunteerism has positive effects all around. "Volunteers increase their self-esteem, discover new talents and develop leadership skills," says Lewis.

"Young people who volunteer can increase their chances of finding profitable employment. Volunteerism also can open career doors for adults. For older adults, volunteerism offers the opportunity to remain active and continue making a contribution to society."

Workshop Planned For Ag Literacy

CHAMBERSBURG (Franklin Co.) — The Pennsylvania Foundation for Better Living is inviting kindergarten through fifth grade teachers to attend the first "Better Living Through Agriculture in the Classroom Workshop," July 20-23, at the Pennsylvania State University.

This fun-filled, hands-on workshop will focus on the holistic educational approach, enabling elementary teachers to develop projects and lessons that integrate agricultural concepts into their existing curriculum, according to Beth Heald Moore, executive director of the Foundation. Arrangements are being made for optional university or certification credit that can be applied for through Penn State for local Intermediate Units.

Teachers will be responsible for a \$10 registration fee and a commitment to share materials and ideas with other local teachers. Additional costs for conference

planning, materials, meals and lodging will be paid by the Foundation through a \$500 "Sponsor Your Favorite Teacher Program" supported by Pennsylvania businesses and agricultural organizations.

"We are currently working with several agricultural organizations to establish the sponsorship program and are seeking additional donations to help cover the cost of meals and special events during the workshop," Moore said.

Participation in the workshop is limited; applications will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis. Interested teachers can request a registration form, and businesses can learn more about the sponsorship program by contacting Pennsylvania Foundation for Better Living, Beth Heald Moore, executive director, 5399 Guitner Road, Chambersburg, PA 17201; (717) 375-2639.



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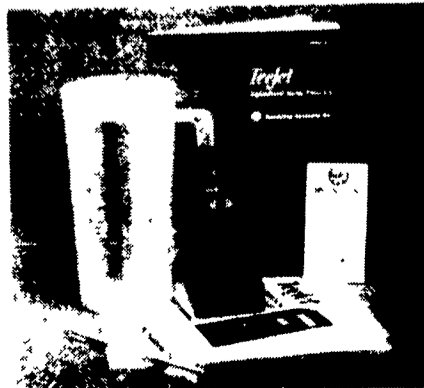
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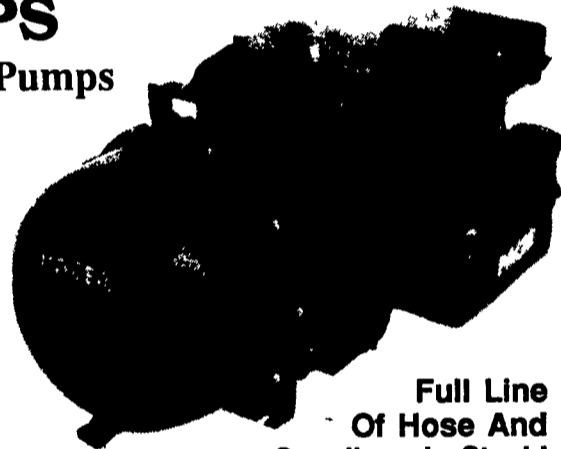


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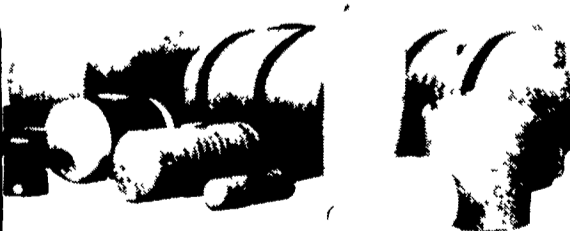
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