Atlantic County 4-H – Targeting Life Skills

All 4-H projects and activities are designed to lead to the development of essential life skills. No matter the subject of the project, at least one of these skill areas should be part of what members are learning.

Life skills are abilities individuals can learn that will help them to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life. In the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model categories of life skills are identified and divided on the basis of the familiar four H's from the 4-H Clover that represent Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Two general categories of skills are included under each of the four headings.

The goal of youth programming is to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for young people to experience life skills, to practice them until they are learned, and be able to use them as necessary throughout a lifetime. Youth development experiences of high quality don't just happen. The best ones are carefully planned (a) to encourage life skill development while delivering subject matter content and (b) to achieve specific results. The TLS Model is intended to be inclusive for all possible life skills. The purpose of the TLS Model is to provide a way to simplify coordination of life skill development with ages and stages tasks so programs will be developmentally appropriate and more effective in achieving identified outcomes. By being generic, the model allows those developing curriculum to incorporate any specific life skill that youth programmers may wish to address using whichever terminology is descriptive of that skill.

THE VALUE OF THE TLS MODEL. . .

The TLS Model provides a format incorporating major points of youth program planning:

- assisting youth to reach their full potential through a positive approach to life skill development
- delivering information and skill practice at the appropriate developmental level for the target audience
- writing specific learning objectives for life skill development that are measurable
- completing an instructional plan that creates experiences based on experiential learning theory to achieve life skill development
- identifying observable/measurable indicators of change using these indicators to effectively evaluate program impact/goal.