

INDIANA 4-H

2022 – 2023
ANNUAL REPORT
JACKSON, LAKE AND
MARION COUNTIES

Indiana 4-H Juntos engages Latino students and families to help them gain knowledge, skills, and resources to ensure high school graduation and broaden career and academic opportunities. Juntos 4-H is a yearlong program that includes regular club meetings, monthly one-on-one academic success coach sessions, six-week family workshop engagement series, family nights, and summer academy and events.

3 COUNTIES AND COUNTING

Juntos, meaning “together” in Spanish, has lived up to its name in Indiana. Through the combined efforts of our 4-H staff, volunteers and greater community, our Juntos programs have grown to reach more than 125 youth and their families across the last 4-years in Jackson, Lake, and Marion Counties.

Juntos enables us to bring 4-H youth development programming to new students and families and, together, build new connections and support to members of our communities.

We are just getting started. Next year we will continue this valuable program in a total of nine counties!



4-H JUNTOS ON THE ROAD 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

17 YOUTH

ATTENDED 4-H
ACADEMY AT
PURDUE

5 STAFF

ATTENDED THE CYFAR
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
EVENT IN PHOENIX, AZ

8 YOUTH, 5 STAFF

ATTENDED THE IGNITE 4-H
CONFERENCE IN
WASHINGTON, DC

68 ATTENDEES

AT THE AGRIBUSINESS
SCIENCE ACADEMY
AT PURDUE

11 YOUTH, 12 STAFF

ATTENDED THE
JUNTOS NATIONAL CONVENING IN
CORVALLIS, OR

9 YOUTH

ATTENDED 4-H
ROUNDUP AT
PURDUE

JUNTOS LEARNINGS

PERSPECTIVES FROM OUR 4-H JUNTOS EDUCATORS AND STAFF



Supporting Students

"[The students] have a sense of belonging. They feel like this group is for me, created by people like me. People that look like me show up, people that speak my language show up, people that can communicate with my parents and care about my well-being."



Helping Families

"The parents appreciate that there is an organization that is giving them some more wrap around support that they might not get at the school system. So, I think parents and kids, they see this program as extremely important."



Renewing the 4-H Mission

"How successful this program has been! It's just the name. The kids grab it and it's just for them and also the families and our community. We have never had a program like Juntos. And you can hear a lot of the community talking about Juntos and that other schools want to have Juntos."



Planning Our Future

"I think our growth is exciting. I think it shows the need for this program in Indiana. We've had a lot of community partners interested, a lot of educators within each county interested in the program. So, while it's exciting, it's also a bit challenging because [each county is] all funded through different sources...that is the biggest challenge right now."

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

BUILDING A SUPPORTIVE NETWORK OF CARING ADULTS AND PEERS

Staff and educators shared that Juntos enables young people to develop positive social relationships with their fellow students and program staff. These relationships foster their sense of belonging, emphasize their value as a person, and contribute to a support network that builds their interpersonal confidence and academic skills.

“It's just created a space aside from home and school, another safe place with caring adults, but also to have fun!”

“It is about recognizing the needs of the community and making sure our program meets them where they're at and making sure that they're comfortable and they feel safe.”

“You also can't discount the impact that all of these caring adults have on those kids and their development...I'm here because I want to help you and I'm an adult. I am not your parent, but I am another caring adult.”

“The teacher's role has to be - this is my job and I need you to do your work. Whereas we are not there for anything other than... just a sense of community. We're here for you. You're here for you. For you.”

“I see that empowerment. Like they walk around schools and they talk about it and they're proud of being part of this group.”

PROVIDING 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING TO NEW YOUTH

Through Juntos, educators and staff indicated that they have new opportunities to reach groups of youth and families who are unfamiliar with the broad goals of youth development in 4-H. Juntos provides a pathway for young people to access all of the support and learning opportunities available through 4-H programming.

“I know in [my] county they've enrolled all of their Juntos kids in their Junior Leaders Program...And so, they're getting access to that program and they might not have otherwise had they not found 4-H because of Juntos.”

“Their opportunities are really opening up beyond Juntos. We have kids from Juntos actually on their way back from Purdue right now! I feel like those youth, because they join 4-H because of the Juntos program, they are receiving access to a whole host of other educational opportunities.”

“We never had any youth from Latino backgrounds in 4-H. Now we're thinking to put some kids on the waiting list because it's just me running the program and it's growing and growing and growing.”

HELPING FAMILIES

BUILDING SKILLS FAMILIES NEED TO SUPPORT THEIR STUDENTS

The Juntos curriculum targets both youth and their family's academic success skills. Juntos staff and educators provide families access to information they need to navigate the school system and advocate for their students. Juntos creates a community in which families are empowered to be part of their student's academic journey.

"Now [families are] more invested into their sons or daughters' education and the student feels that support...It would be the opposite if we just gave this information to the students because you need that support system from...the family unit."

"[Juntos is important] because the information that we teach. Juntos brings to the community information that we assume they know. Families don't know it."

"Educating parents that they have the right to request [certain classes for their students]. They have the right to know what classes their child needs in order to graduate. All of those things, now that they know that this program is here to do that for them, it's like an eye opener. It's like the light bulb went on."

"In talking with our Juntos parents, they're just so grateful that there is an organization out there to give their youth that extra support they need. A lot of these parents came to America to give their kids a better life. They really want their kids to succeed."

FOSTERING CONNECTIONS AND CREATING COMMUNITY

Staff and educators discussed that Juntos creates a space for families to build a greater sense of community. The program fills a need for more opportunities to bring Latino families together to receive and offer support. This sense of connectedness also encourages families to give back to the program, 4-H, and their local community.

"The [families are] part of something that gives them pride, it gives them that sense and it empowers them."

"One family told me, "This is my first time that I met with other parents. Before Juntos, I didn't know who is here, who is Latino. Here is my first time and I feel safe.""

"We had a parent say, "I love coming because this is a way I meet other parents like me because in a really large school." How do they meet other Latino parents? Because it's not like they have a tight, small community...So this was a way for them to meet other families. And we had one mom especially who really talked about how much that meant to her that she could connect."

"Belonging is very important because they feel like they're part of the community. That's what I see in my group in my county. They are involved. They are being involved more in community service, wanting to help, wanting to participate. They ask, "What can we do?""

RENEWING THE 4-H MISSION

JUNTOS HOLDS PERSONAL VALUE TO EDUCATORS AND STAFF

Program educators and staff see Juntos as a program that addresses a need they have personally experienced and seen for some time. Many staff feel like Juntos is what they wanted in school and being a part of the program gives them a greater sense of purpose and motivation for their work in 4-H.

“I think that right now, what I'm doing is where I should be at this time, because it's my mission. It's my way of giving back and it's my way of [giving] what I needed back then when I was in their shoes. Now I'm able to provide that for other students.”

“[It gives me a] sense of reward, sense of pride and a sense that what I'm doing right now is benefiting others. Something that I wanted is now in place. And even though maybe I didn't get it, it benefits other students and it benefits other families.”

“[Juntos is] something that I wanted when I was going through the school system, where I'm from in [their] County. For me, it was like I just had myself and my parents and that was it... I feel that if there was a program for that, where I would have felt that sense of belonging, it would have been better. So, I saw the opportunity. It's rewarding to see that something that I would have wanted is there, and it is beneficial. At the end of the day and it benefits me because it's rewarding now for the students.”

JUNTOS RENEWS THE 4-H MISSION

Juntos educators and staff believe that 4-H needs to adapt to the changing landscape of the youth they serve.

Juntos offers a new approach to 4-H offerings that aligns with established program principles and could be a valuable partner to help move 4-H forward.

“I think Juntos is such a beautiful program because it brings a new identity to 4-H. The key to 4-H is that we're trying to teach kids life skills. Whether that is raising animals or whether that is preparing for their life after high school, that is the goal. It's what's so exciting to me about Juntos and why I bought into it is because it's cutting edge. This is new. This is exciting. We are helping 4-H grow out of their comfort zone into a whole new thing that they need to do to stay relevant.”

“In [some counties] our demographics have changed. Our kids don't show animals. They don't live on farms. You have to adjust your programming.”

“But I always tell volunteers that the project we're focused on is not the swine, it's not the clothing, it's not the scrapbooking, it's the kid. The kid is the project in 4-H. And so, I think the gap that Juntos fills I feel like we're being an example for what 4-H could be across the state, across the nation. I think we are showing different ways that we can provide youth development opportunities.”

PLANNING OUR FUTURE

CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE OF 4-H JUNTOS

To continue leading a successful in demand program, Juntos educators and staff need more time and resources. As a program rooted in relationships, program leaders want protected time to develop and maintain connections with the students and families in their county and are concerned that there are inadequate long-term funding plans.

“[Juntos] is an extra part of my job and its becoming like two-full time [jobs].”

“We need more support [for] the program because I feel like this is growing and we don't have the people, we don't have the resources to implement the program much longer.”

“When we first started, we were smaller, it was easier to handle the groups...but now we are growing and it is much more difficult.”

I think it's important [to have someone dedicated full-time] because this is very intentional work that takes time. It's not something somebody can just do in their spare time. It takes very intentional relationship building and I think it would be extremely beneficial to the program to have somebody doing that work full time.”

“While I feel like we've been able to make a lot of progress last year, I think even more can be done if we have people working on this with more time to develop some of those relationships. We just need the time to be able to put in the time required to build relationships and to build those partnerships.”

4-H JUNTOS
SUSTAINABILITY
SOLUTIONS
FROM OUR STAFF
AND EDUCATORS

INCREASE COMMUNITY BUY-IN

Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses and organizations locally

STREAMLINE SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic state level alignment and agreements

CREATE A STANDARD STATEWIDE APPROACH

Develop a coordinated approach to help counties overcome common barriers

LEVERAGE PURDUE

Seek campus partnerships that demonstrate post-secondary educational and career pathways

Juntos
FOR A BETTER EDUCATION | PARA UNA MEJOR EDUCACIÓN

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