

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Sewing workshop provides training to local youth volunteers

AT A GLANCE

UI Extension educators and staff in Bannock, Bingham, Bonneville and Franklin counties trained community members and volunteers in project sewing and needlecraft.

The Situation

Sewing is a lifetime skill and is a popular 4-H project in Idaho. With competing time and money to enroll in multiple 4-H projects and extracurricular activities, youth often choose between two good options. By planning and completing sewing projects, youth have a creative outlet, a sense of accomplishment and learn practical skills. Sewing is a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) skill utilizing math in measuring and using a sewing machine. It also helps youth follow the 4-H Vision to become responsible and productive citizens.

Opportunities to learn sewing skills seem to be dwindling. Sewing instruction in public schools is often limited by funding, lack of qualified teachers, administrative support, and by adequate class space. University of Idaho Extension, Eastern District, family and consumer sciences (FCS) educators have also observed a lack of 4-H sewing volunteers in their counties.

Our Response

In 2022, FCS educators discussed the need for 4-H sewing volunteers in their counties. The high demand for sewing instruction with a very small group of volunteers to teach youth was an identified challenge.



Logo created and used for workshop materials. Graphic by Krista Cernyar.

The workshop was patterned after an Extension conference in Utah which Cheri Carter and Julie Buck attended in March 2023. Project packet supplies were assembled for each of the six projects, which included basic sewing and project completion skills. UI Extension faculty, staff and a guest participated as presenters and supported the event: Laura Sant, Fabric Christmas Star; Cherie Carter, Fabric Collage; Katie Hickok, Ben Jackson and Becca Robinson (intern), Zip Pencil Bags; Leslee Blanch, Embroidered Bear; Paige Wray, Pinch Bowl; and Julie Buck, Fabric Tube Basket. Supplies were paid for by an Innovative Project Grant from UI Extension. Sponsors were found for raffle prizes and lunch was paid for by participants.

Program Outcomes

Participants included nine adults and one youth, all female Caucasian (one of Hispanic ethnicity), from four area counties. Participants were seated with two or three other people at a table, so everyone became well acquainted. The workshop objectives are linked to the corresponding outcomes.

- Objective:** To teach an innovative 4-H Youth Development Volunteer Sewing Skills workshop to instruct on a variety of sewing skills.

Outcome: Five UI Extension educators and staff, along with a guest instructor, taught six classes which included basic sewing, embroidery, creative design and more advanced projects.
- Objective:** Participants who volunteer with youth will become more confident in their own sewing skills and be more willing to teach others.

Outcome: All participants surveyed expressed an understanding of new sewing skills and learned a new sewing/needlecraft technique. See Table 1.
- Objective:** Provide UI Extension outreach education to our communities.

Outcome: The 10 participants were from Bonneville (5), Bingham (2), Madison (1) and Jefferson (2) counties. Four (40%) of participants are currently teaching youth sewing skills.

A Qualtrics survey was used to collect knowledge, participation, and skill information. Of the ten people attending, seven completed the survey online and one on paper (80%). The survey was made up of two knowledge, four participation and seven skill questions. The knowledge question involved using the color wheel with three people (42.8%) answering correctly and 100% knowing the correct country of origin of the fabric star project. Four (57.14%) attendees currently

teach youth sewing classes and one will start teaching in the fall of 2023.

Table 1. Sewing and project skills learned

| Skills learned | Response % | Response N |
|--|------------|------------|
| Following sewing directions | 71% | 5 |
| Working with synthetic fabric | 87.5% | 7 |
| Line up corners | 42.8% | 3 |
| Putting in a zipper | 85.7% | 6 |
| Knowing when and when not to iron | 28.5% | 2 |
| Counting stitches when embroidering | 28.5% | 2 |
| Marking fabric | 57% | 4 |
| Turning out corners | 42.8% | 3 |
| Using Peltex fusible interfacing | 57% | 4 |
| Using a sewing stiletto | 85.7% | 6 |
| Fabric folding | 42.8% | 3 |
| Follow a printed pattern onto blank aida cloth | 57% | 4 |
| Cutting fabric without a pattern | 85.7% | 6 |
| Using the color wheel & color schemes | 42.8% | 3 |
| Completing and securing the stitches | 42.8% | 3 |
| Top stitching | 57% | 4 |
| Leaving appropriate seam allowances | 71% | 5 |
| Using a Jelly Roll tube maker | 100% | 8 |

The Future

Six participants (85.71%) responding to the survey expressed interest in attending another sewing workshop in the future.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

This project was funded by the 2023 University of Idaho Extension Innovative Project Award funds. Sponsors of raffle prizes included local businesses.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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