

# impact

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

## Elevating teens interpersonal and workforce skills at teen retreat

### AT A GLANCE

Idaho's average debt per resident is \$120,766. Soft skills contribute to 75% of an employees' success. Teaching money management and workforce skills is important in setting up a secure future.

### The Situation

Learning about personality types can help students discover themselves and others. This allows them to solve problems and handle stress better. Stanford Research Institute found soft skills contribute to 75% of an employee's success, while technical skills contribute to 25%. Helping teens discover their personality type can help them develop a growth mindset. This mindset builds positive development and gives teens confidence and belief that they have the ability to be successful.

Along with soft skills financial literacy education gives an individual the tools and resources they need to be financially secure throughout their life. In the United States only 41% of the population state they can cover a \$1,000 emergency expense with savings. Fifty percent of non-retired adults in the U.S. have some savings for retirement.

Idaho's average debt per resident is \$120,766. Debt can be found in these categories of Credit Card, Student Loan, Mortgage and Auto Loans. Teaching youth money management skills will increase their confidence and reduce their stress around these topics.



Participants of the 2024 Elevate Teen Retreat. Photo by Cindy Kinder.

### Our Response

Extension educators Cindy Kinder and Chandra Vaughan along with 4-H coordinators Jeni Bywater and Mashelle Barlow planned, coordinated and taught at the Elevate Teen Retreat hosted at the Albion Campus Center in Albion. Teens (82) from across the state joined planners and guest speakers for a three-day event in February (2023) and March (2024). Friday evening activities included introductions to leadership and workforce topics, a photo scavenger hunt and tour of the Historic Albion School. Saturday events focused on selected topics and ended with a campfire and networking activities. Sunday morning brought discussion about local and statewide 4-H Opportunities and "Thanks a Bunch" activities. Planners and guest

speakers taught a variety of lessons. In 2023, topics focused on personal leadership and workforce soft skills of public speaking and human personality types. In 2024, financial education was the focus which included areas of Jobs and Salaries, Resume Building, Side Hustle, Goals and Savings, Bills and Budgets, Checks and Investments, and Debt.

## Program Outcomes

Giving youth the opportunity to develop and use interpersonal and workforce skills allowed teens to perform skills competently, which can be linked to economic productivity. Youth attending the annual retreat learned about a variety of interpersonal and workforce skills; after learning those skills they were able to apply them during the retreat. Table 1 indicates survey results for 2023 and 2024; 65-84% stated they were planning to change their behavior over the next year. The 2024 survey indicated that 65-80% did have a behavior change and used the skills learned in 2023. Participants stated, “I need this information; I am going to college soon” and “Because of you I am now saving the majority of my birthday money.” Participant’s feedback also included that the topics were important to them now in their early adulthood.

## The Future

Teen Elevate Retreat is an annual event. Planners of the event seek out future topics from advisory committees and participants to focus and build personal, workforce and financial skills.

## Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Guest speakers including UI Extension educators Grant Loomis, Blaine County and Lance Hansen, Madison County and Amanda Kent leadership coach and creator of the Take the Reins Equine Guided Teen Coaching Program were an important part of the program.

Donors and sponsors are sought to keep the program facilities and meals affordable. Donors at the weekend event were Walmart, Costco, Puder’s Pizza, Falls Brand Meats and Southwind Farms.

Table 1: 2023 & 2024 Survey Results of Teen Elevate Retreat, Percent Participants Ranking High to Very High.

Question	Color Personality Types	Speaking with Confidence	Passion into Profit
Did you know about the topic, before the retreat	28%	60%	38%
Did you know about the topic, after the retreat	97%	90%	96%
Did you learn something new	78%	60%	78%
Did you use what was learned	63%	52%	86%
Do you plan to use in the future	65%	84%	83%
Follow up 1 year later, Did you use topic	65%	80%	Survey in 2025

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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