

Review Article for Youth Action 2011 by Amy Erving

It was a lovely Sunday evening on July 10th, 2011 when 4-H delegates from all over B.C. ages 14-15 came together at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops to take part in Youth Action. From Vancouver Island to the Central Interior and Yellowhead West, I was joined by thirty-nine outstanding 4-Hers, where we began our journey to becoming better and more confident leaders. The conference ran from July 10th to July 14th and over the course of those five days we got the chance to learn about leadership in our clubs, communities and everyday lives. We also had the opportunity to improve our communication and teamwork skills during the fun group sessions and activities that had been planned.

The theme of our conference was "Running the Race". At the beginning of the week, we were all honestly a bit confused how that applied to being a leader, but by the end of the week, we knew just how it did. Each day during our group activities we tested and improved our leadership skills. I truly got to know everyone quite well when doing these fun group program sessions. Whether it was figuring out how to get all of my team through a hula hoop in the air, without touching it or skiing across the grass field with three people attached to each ski attempting to figure out the best and most successful technic! We also learned a lot about what kind of leader we think we are and what kind of leader we want to be.

Over the course of the week, we slowly figured out that "Running the Race" meant that there are different steps we must take to become successful in any leadership role. Each step holds its own importance such as Program Session 1: "Lacing our Shoes" was the start where we learned about how to begin and prepare yourself to be a leader. Another good example is Program Session 5: "Picking Up the Pace-Taking a Run at Leadership" where we each had to lead our small groups in different activities that suited our individual leader types. One big thing we all learned was that being a leader does not always mean stepping up and standing at the front. A smart leader knows how to step back, but still lead by supporting ideas and helping initiate good plans. We also learned that there are many different kinds of leaders out there and each type comes with its own strengths.

The week was finished up with an awards presentation, a fantastic dance and last but not least a powerpoint presentation to look back at all the fun things we did together and everything that we had learnt. Going into Youth Action, we were forty regular kids. After the conference, it is safe to say that we are now forty enthusiastic, dynamic and positive thinking kids. We are ready to make a difference and help out in any challenge we are faced with. We are confident to step-up to any leadership role. We

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are now a group that is on our way to becoming outstanding leaders wherever we go. So look out for us because we are ready to make a difference and make a change!

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

~Ralph Waldo Emerson