

**SERVICE-LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP LIFE SKILLS:  
AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY**

A Record of Study

by

BARBARA DARLENE HENDERSON LOCKE

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

August 2004

Major Subject: Agricultural Education

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August 2004

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## **ABSTRACT**

Service-Learning and Leadership Life Skills:

An Experimental Study.

(August 2004)

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This study examined the effect of service activities on the development of leadership life skills in youth and if having a reflection component as part of the activity makes a difference. Additionally, the study examined the impact of selected demographics including age, gender, type of service completed monthly and 4-H membership on the development of leadership life skills.

Participants in the study were from two samples. One group represented the El Paso National Youth Service Day, the other represented the District 11 4-H Leadership Lab in Brenham, Texas. Participants were randomly assigned to a control (no reflection) or treatment (with reflection) group. Youth participants self rated their leadership life skills using a 33-question post-test only questionnaire. Demographics were reported in nine additional questions.

The major findings of the study are as follows: 1) Overall, the participants reported their perceived leadership life skills to be high in four of the five subscales; 2) The inclusion

of a reflection component did not significantly affect perceived leadership life skills; 3) Type of service, whether direct or indirect, had a significant impact on perceived leadership life skills; 4) 4-H membership had a significant impact on the Personal Leadership Development subscale.

## DEDICATION

Mark Twain said, “Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did. So throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade wind in your sails. Explore. Dream.” That has been my attitude pursuing this doctoral degree.

I dedicate this work to my parents, Morgan and Barbara Henderson and to the two most important people in my life, my husband Steve and our son, Kyle. Mom and Dad, you instilled in me the idea that I could do anything I set my mind to. It was through your teaching I learned to have a good work ethic and to follow through on my commitments.

Steve, throughout you have encouraged me, you have had faith in me and you have believed in my abilities professionally and educationally. I could not have asked for a better support system. Thank you for all the times you stepped up to the plate as “Mr. Mom” so willfully.

Kyle, thank you for putting up with Mom’s desire to have it all. A career, education and family. You have been and always will be the number one priority. I hope you gain from this experience that all things are possible if you want them to be.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Reaching this goal has been a team effort. The Joint Faculties of the Agricultural Education Departments at Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University deserve tremendous credit for stepping out into this new field of distance education. Their servant leadership was demonstrated in their desire to serve professional educators like myself who desired additional education but lacked the ability, due to work, family or logistical restraints, to pursue such education in a traditional setting.

My sincere gratitude goes to my committee, Dr. Barry Boyd, Dr. Steve Fraze, Dr. Christine Townsend, Dr. Dave Lawver and Dr. Doug Welsh, for their time and commitment and willingness to advise in this new frontier. Thank you especially to Dr. Boyd for being “my legs” on campus and for running so many traps.

I appreciate and commend the Texas Cooperative Extension for encouraging higher education among its professional staff and for supporting such endeavors. Dr. Martha E. Couch, Assistant Director for 4-H and Youth Development provided emotional encouragement and support as well as professional development time for the pursuit of this program. Thank you Dr. Couch, you’ll always be a friend and a mentor, even when you are not “the boss”.

Co-Hort ‘04, God bless each of you. We’ve been there for each other and we’ll continue to be there in the future. Stay the course.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of Study

Statistics indicate that youth are involved in their community. In 1984, only 27% of all high schools reported having students involved in community service and 9% reported service-learning activities. In 1999, those numbers rose to 83% and 46% respectively (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999a). Reported service activities are being conducted as extensions of the classroom and outside of the classroom through community-based organizations.

The diversity of service activities and participants has resulted in recent studies attempting to identify and separate service-learning and community service. The National Student Service-Learning and Community Service Survey (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999a) defined service-learning as curriculum-based community service that integrates classroom instruction with community service activities. Community service refers to those activities that are non-curriculum-based and are recognized by and/or arranged through the school. Several research studies also identify programs within public school settings versus private schools. Further breakdown exists to examine if the community is urban, suburban, or rural. Researchers have evaluated programs to identify those that are coordinated by the schools versus others that are coordinated by community-based organizations.

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This dissertation follows the style and format of the *Journal of Agricultural Education*.

Service activities performed by youth result in more than just benefit for the recipient. Students engaged in service projects learn about themselves, have opportunities for career exploration, experience group dynamics and goal setting, practice their communication skills, and feel valued in the community in which they serve. These service activities provide youth with the opportunity to use newly gained skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities (Close Up Foundation, 1995).

Schine (1990) points to the value of service activities in helping youth become more connected to their communities.

Although the media focus on "at-risk" youth, (the dropout, runaway, drug user and/or seller, teen parent), many more youth are simply aimless or alienated. Both a cause and an effect of this alienation are the negative perceptions of today's adolescents so common among adults. But when young people become involved in service in their communities, the "we/they" stereotypes of both young and old are replaced by new perceptions and understanding (p. 2).

These negative perceptions are coupled with the fact that leadership theorists believe we are approaching the twenty-first century with a dramatic deficit in leaders (Gardner, 1987; Kouzes & Posner, 1990; Bolt, 1996). Other theorists believe the deficit already exists (Hesselbein, Goldsmith, & Beckhard (Eds.), 1996). Bolt (1996) extends this debate in his contention that this deficit is not a deficit of leadership, but a deficit in leadership development.

The facts are there: we have aimless, alienated youth and youth that are not

experiencing leadership opportunities. It is imperative; therefore, that schools, communities, and organizations focus their efforts to provide leadership development opportunities for youth. One proven method for this involvement is through community service activities (Schine, 1990).

Gardner (1987) criticized the current education system for being ineffective in developing leaders due to the focus on individual performance at the expense of group performance. Society's need for experts and professionals rather than leaders, is said to "snuff out" leadership development among students.

There can be little doubt that a strong program of community service, structured to give every young adolescent an opportunity to participate and to experience the empowerment that comes with making a difference, can be a positive step toward addressing some of these critical problems (Schine, 1990). Kielsmeier (2000) provides support for service activities in school systems. He states, "because students are involved in service-learning and are expected to solve tangible problems and share responsibility for teaching, they discover for themselves key elements that are largely missing in the school reform debate: meaning and purpose."

To become productive and contributing individuals who can be effective and proactive in determining the course of tomorrow's world, today's youth must develop positive leadership knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations. Preparing today's youth for their roles as tomorrow's leaders is a challenge we all face (Cox, 1996).

Whereas the classroom is an excellent stage for service activities, service projects can also be conducted effectively outside of the classroom. In these instances, the same

focus on academic curriculum, plus focused attention on social responsibility, can be employed. The 4-H and Youth Development Program of Cooperative Extension addresses both of these issues as well as the attainment of life skills. The Annual 4-H Youth Development Enrollment Report 2002 Fiscal Year reported 675,074 youth involved in Citizenship and Civic Education and 1,858,325 youth enrolled in Personal Development and Leadership activities (United States Department of Agriculture, 2002). Cooperative Extension was established in 1914 with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act and provided a means of taking the land-grant university to the people (Rasmussen, 1989). 4-H is a youth development program administered through the Land Grant college system.

Life skills such as leadership, teamwork, decision-making, problem solving, reasoning, and communication, along with personal qualities such as responsibility, self-esteem, and integrity, can be found in almost any description of an Extension youth program (El Sawi & Smith, 1997). These are also among the skills and competencies required for entry into the workforce as identified in the America 2000 report, by the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (United States Department of Labor, 1992).

The combined efforts of service learning or community service with a structured program such as the 4-H and Youth Development Program of Cooperative Extension has the opportunity to provide youth with service projects that are real, meaningful, and that will have measurable results in the areas of life skills attainment. As 4-H programs are typically offered in an informal setting, rather than a classroom, service activities tend to lean more toward the community service type versus service-learning.



Whereas, over the past four or five years there has been a dramatic increase in the focus on research in service-learning (Giles & Eyster, 1994), the data is not conclusive. Research evaluations have documented increased student awareness of the community through participation in community-related service activities and other positive attitudinal responses, but these data have not yet been reinforced by sound objective findings regarding enduring changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, or behavior caused by participation in community service or service-learning (Alt & Medrich, 1994; Andersen, 1998; Billig, 2000; Conrad and Hedin, 1991). The void still exists.

Increasing community service participation has long been a goal in the United States. Some examples of how this goal has played out in national policy are President Kennedy's creation of the Peace Corps, President Bush's creation of the Points of Light Foundation, President Clinton's creation of AmeriCorps, and Congress' adoption of the National Education Goals. The National Education Goals include the objective that all students will be involved in activities that promote and demonstrate good citizenship and community service (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997).

#### Statement of the Problem

Youth providing service to others has gained much attention with the national interest in youth service and service learning (Benson, 1997). A young person who participates in a well-designed service program in every grade of elementary and secondary school could accumulate 800 hours by high school graduation and will have developed the habits and skills for a lifetime of volunteering (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2002). Does participation in service projects yield increased

personal skills development? To what extent do youths' attitudes and behaviors change in areas such as personal and social responsibility, intent to serve, perceived ability to "make a difference" and communicating with others (Blyth, Saito, & Berkas, 1997)? Due to the increased number of service-learning programs, it is essential that more information be provided that evaluates the effectiveness of the program in developing youths' leadership life skills (Stafford, 2001).

The effectiveness of the service-learning model in developing leadership life skills must be assessed before it is adopted by organizations. It is essential that youth develop leadership skills through experience, whether it happens in school or in community-based organizations. The 4-H program typically offers a non-structured opportunity for community service versus the formal structure of service-learning. Is there a difference?

If service-learning demonstrates that these skills can be attained through the process, the model will be effectively adopted by youth organizations across the nation (Stafford, 2001). The result for the youth will be their improved leadership skills and understanding the importance of service and community. Results of the study will be shared with youth leadership organizations that may be considering starting a service-learning program or want to expand on current leadership development programming.

#### Purposes and Objectives

This study will examine the effect of service projects on the development of leadership life skills in youth. It will describe whether a reflection component increases the impact of the service experience on the life skills development of youth. Reflection is

the critical factor that distinguishes service-learning from community service. The study will also examine a possible relationship between youth's service experience, their self-perceived leadership life skills, and selected demographic characteristics, including their involvement in the 4-H and Youth Development Program of Cooperative Extension.

The following objectives were developed to accomplish these purposes:

1. Describe whether personal characteristics impact the development of leadership life skills.
2. Describe whether service projects impact the development of leadership life skills.
3. Describe whether having a reflection component as part of the service project (service-learning) makes a greater impact than a service project without reflection (community service) in the development of leadership life skills.
4. Describe whether a relationship exists between the youth's service experience, their self-perceived leadership life skills and selected demographic characteristics.
5. Describe whether participation in 4-H and youth development activities has an impact on self-perceived leadership life skills.

#### Definition of Terms

4-H – The nation's largest youth development program “combining the efforts of nearly 7 million youth; 761,242 volunteer leaders; about 3,600 FTE's of professional staff; 105 state land-grant universities; state and local governments; private-sector partners; state and local 4-H foundations; the National 4-H Council; and the National 4-H Headquarters in

the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture” (USDA, 2002, p. 3).

Community service – For the purposes of this study, student community service is defined as community service activities that are non-curriculum-based and are recognized by and/or arranged through the school. The community service: may be mandatory or voluntary; generally does not include explicit learning objectives or organized reflection or critical analysis activities; and may include activities that take place off of school grounds or may happen primarily within the school. Community service activities may be carried out as school-wide events, separately organized school programs, or projects conducted by school-sponsored clubs (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999a).

Contributor to community – A contributor to community is committed, involved, and knowledgeable about service and leadership. He or she uses these skills to participate as a citizen in solving local problems, which inadvertently betters the community (Seidl, Mulkey, & Blanton, 1999).

Cooperative Extension – Established in 1914 with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act. Provided network to disseminate research from land-grant Universities, the state agricultural stations, and USDA to all who need them, in each of the fifty states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariannas, Micronesia, and the District of Columbia (Rasmussen, 1989).

Creative problem solver – A creative problem solver seeks to find solutions to problems by defining and understanding the problem and generating many possible solutions to solve that problem. Through an organized plan that involves appraising tasks and

designing processes, creative problem solvers participate in making effective decisions that result in change (Treffinger, 1995).

Effective team skills – Effective team skills focus on team development and performance.

Team development refers to helping the group finish a task. Team performance refers to the team dynamics and working to maintain relationships (Northouse, 2001).

Experiential Education – “the process whereby knowledge is created through transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). Kolb’s model is cyclical and includes a concrete experience, observations and reflections, formation of abstract concepts and generalizations, and testing implications of new concepts in new situations.

Life skills –the skills one must possess in order to enjoy happy, prosperous, and healthy lives; possessing “these skills allows one to handle current problems, anticipate and prevent future ones, and advance their mental health, social functioning, economic welfare, and physical well-being” (Schinke & Gilchrist, 1984, p. 13).

Personal leadership development – Personal leadership development ensures that students will become an effective and proactive leader in the changing world today. This leader will serve and influence individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2001).

Reflection – Reflection is a continuous process through the service learning experience. This critical thinking helps students prepare for, carry out, and learn from their service. It encourages participants to understand the value and meaning of their service. Reflection activities can be varied (Reed & Koliba, 1995). For this study, journal writing and informal face-to-face discussion were used.

Self-directed learner – Being a self-directed learner assigns to the youth the responsibility

of seeking out learning opportunities, deciding what should be learned, and how it should be learned. This type of learner can apply learned concepts to real-life experiences. This type of learning culture can nurture the development of the abilities required for self-direction (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998).

Service-learning – For the purposes of this study, service-learning is defined as curriculum-based community service that integrates classroom instruction with community service activities. The service must: be organized in relation to an academic course or curriculum; have clearly stated learning objectives; address real community needs in a sustained manner over a period of time; and assist students in drawing lessons from the service through regularly scheduled, organized reflection or critical analysis activities, such as classroom discussions, presentations, or directed writing (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999a).

#### Theoretical Base for the Study

Community service and service-learning are experiential learning activities that allow students to participate completely in the learning process, have direct contact with social, personal or research problems, and complete self-evaluation of the work performed (Kielsmeier, 2000). Sixty-four percent of all public schools, including 83 percent of public high schools, had students participating in community service activities recognized by and/or arranged through the school (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999b).

The goal of 4-H and Youth Development programs is to develop youth who are capable, contributing members of society. This is achieved through participation in project learning experiences and service activities. Often adult volunteers guide or assist youth in

their endeavors, creating an intergenerational learning experience. The 4-H motto, “Learn by Doing” affirms the commitment to experiential learning (Iowa State 4-H Youth Development, 2003).

Service activities are coordinated and conducted in school settings as well as community-based settings. The activities can be described as community service or service-learning depending on several factors. The definitions of the two terms also vary from school to school and community to community. Two of the most frequently used factors are linkage to educational objectives and presence or absence of a reflection component. Although no one universally accepted definition exists (Schine, 1990), these two factors nearly always are considered in the definition of service-learning.

The direct value of service to the development of leadership life skills is still very vague in the literature. There are models of experiential learning such as the one developed by the Louisiana State University Cooperative Extension Service (1997). The six steps of the model can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the experience. The steps include: 1) Creating partnerships with stakeholders; 2) Selecting service-learning projects; 3) Planning and preparing; 4) Preparing youth for service through the organizations’ mission and goals; 5) Structuring reflection; and 6) Evaluation.

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service (Mantooth, 2003), in partnership with Learn and Serve America, developed an extensive service-learning component as part of their overall 4-H experience. In it, five outcomes of participation in planned service activities, are identified:

- Personal growth: self-esteem, personal responsibility, confirm beliefs and

values, self-motivation

- Social growth: communication skills, interpersonal skills, team building, understanding others that are different, concern for others
- Intellectual growth: critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, decision making skills, knowledge about social issues, academic subject matter
- Citizenship: civic responsibility, awareness of community needs, understanding government, awareness of individual contributions to the larger society
- Workplace Preparation and Career Exploration: consistency and regular attendance, office and organizational culture, skills related to specific jobs.

Involvement in service activities can lead to significant changes in personal leadership and community contribution skills as a result of the service-learning experience. Youth participating in reflection activities as part of their service also indicated higher self-perceived scores in Personal Leadership Development and Contributor to Community (Stafford, 2001). However, Stafford recommended replicating the research with a larger audience to determine if there is significant difference in leadership life skills.

#### Assumptions

1. The instrument used in this study measured leadership life skills as perceived by the youth. The subscales measured were effective team skills, self-directed learner, contributor to community, creative problem solver, and personal leadership development.



2. The participants cooperated by participating in a service project and reflecting on their experiences on April 12, 2003 or June 5, 2003, depending on the sample.
3. The participants may have been part of the planning and conduct of the service activity.

#### Delimitations

This study was delimited to include only those individuals participating in either the El Paso National Youth Service Day, April 12, 2003 or the District 11 4-H Leadership Lab on June 5, 2003. The participants were selected randomly and volunteered to participate in the study. The instrument and experimental design used in studying the development of leadership life skills through service-learning could be used by others to aid in the assessment of their service-learning programs.

#### Limitations

1. The study only focuses on participants in the El Paso National Youth Service Day activity April 12, 2003 or the 4-H members participating in District 11 4-H Leadership Lab on June 5, 2003. The results cannot be generalized to all youth.
2. The study was limited to a one-time service event.
3. Subject's responses regarding their self-perceived leadership life skills are highly subjective.
4. The study only investigated the youth's perception of the following leadership skills: effective team skills, self-directed learner, contributor to

community, creative problem solver, and their personal leadership development.

5. Subject matter mentioned in the wording of the instrument may result in potential response bias.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### History and Definition of Service-Learning and Community Service

John Dewey, an advocate of experience based learning, believed that students would learn more effectively and become better citizens if they engaged in service to the community and had this service incorporated into their academic curriculum (Dewey, 1916). Dewey (1938) also said that young people in traditional education systems do have experiences, but the experiences are defective and wrong in character. The experiences lack a connection to future experiences, or the real world. Service learning is a form of experiential education whose pedagogy rests on principles established by Dewey and other experiential learning theorists early in this century (Furco, 2002).

William Kilpatrick was another advocate of service in the schools. He argued that learning should take place outside the classroom and involve efforts to meet real community needs. These efforts were seen just after World War I and throughout the 1930s. Education was viewed as a means to teach social transformation (Beyer, 1997).

The Fifties saw President Eisenhower's endorsement of education systems that stressed participation and direct community involvement. Yet, when the Sixties arrived and community activism was the rage, the aforementioned project was all but forgotten. In the Seventies, there was a resurgence to re-align students with the communities (Hedin & Conrad, 1991). Efforts were made to have students interact with a larger audience, to be involved in real and meaningful tasks and to experience responsibility, including participation in service activities.

More recently, the value of service in the school has been advocated in literature. Conrad & Hedin's (1991) review of current literature describe the argument for incorporating service in public education "as a means to stimulate learning and social development, as a means of reforming society and preserving a democracy, and as an antidote to the separation of youth from the wider community" (p. 745). While the studies are not longitudinal, the evidence strongly suggests that volunteer service leads to subsequent community involvement" (Eyler, 2000, p.1).

What is service-learning and how does it differ from community service?

Kendall & Associates (1990) review of the literature revealed 147 different terms and definitions related to service-learning. Kendall & Associates classified service-learning into two categories based on Stanton's definitions and descriptions. The two categories are: service-learning as a kind of education where there are myriad ways that students can perform service; and service-learning as a philosophy with the belief that education must be linked to social responsibility and that learning is connected to experience.

The concept of service-learning is simply not clear as was made evident by Learning in Deed's review of literature conducted in 1998 and 1999. The study sought to develop a "snapshot" of public perception about service-learning. Results indicate that 41% of the articles reviewed had accurate definitions of service-learning, while 46% had no definitions and 11% had inaccurate definitions. Over 50% of the articles described service-learning positively with only 4% of the articles giving a negative tone (Neal, 2003).

Service-learning joins two complex concepts: community action, the "service,"

and efforts to learn more from that action and connect what is learned to existing knowledge, the “learning,” (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). It could be said that service-learning is an intensified community service activity. “Service-learning connects young people to their community, placing them in challenging situations where they associate with adults and accumulate experiences that can strengthen traditional academic studies” (Close Up Foundation, 1995, p. 1).

A quality Service-Learning Program contains the following Essential Elements, according to the Corporation for National and Community Service (2002):

- Service projects have clear educational goals that require the application of concepts, content, and skills from the academic disciplines.
- Projects engage students in challenging cognitive and developmental tasks.
- Teachers use assessment to enhance student learning and to document and evaluate how well they have met standards.
- Service tasks have clear goals, meet genuine community needs, and have significant consequences.
- Teachers use formative and summative evaluation in a systematic evaluation.
- Students have a voice in selecting, designing, implementing, and evaluating their service project.
- Diversity is valued and demonstrated by participants, and partnerships with the community.
- Students are prepared for all aspects of their work.
- Students reflect before, during, and after service. Reflection encourages

critical thinking and is a central force in the design and fulfillment of curricular objectives.

- Multiple methods acknowledge, celebrate, and validate students' service work.

One method of distinguishing between community service, internships, and service-learning is to examine who benefits from the activity. Internships, such as student teaching, typically benefit the student. Beneficiaries of traditional community service activities are the recipients of the service. Contrast these two descriptions with that of service-learning where both the service recipients and those engaged in service are co-beneficiaries. The students involved in service-learning gain from enhanced education in their application of skills learned in the classroom to real-life situations (Neal, 2003).

To compound the issue of determining which is more effective, service-learning or community service, are the historical implications of the two perceived definitions.

Service-learning advocates associate community service

with an elitist notion of social obligation that implies the moral superiority of those performing the service. Community service is often associated with the context of criminals whose sentence includes performing some task that benefits society but may well be personally embarrassing or distasteful for the performer. Also, they associate community service with purely altruistic or charitable activities in which the personal benefits of the service consist of a positive impact on the souls of those who perform the service, without their really learning

anything significant in the process (Furco & Billig, 2002, p. 5).

The National Service-Learning Cooperative states that service-learning is a teaching and learning method that connects meaningful community service experience with academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility (Shumer & Cook, 1999). For the purposes of the National Student Service-Learning and Community Service Survey conducted in 1999, community service was defined as activities that are non-curriculum-based and are recognized by and/or arranged through the school. Clearly, throughout the research and in application, the lines are not distinct between community service and service-learning.

While the benefits of service-learning are generally linked more closely with academia, community service benefits are more varied. In the context of community service, students develop skills in team building, leadership, conflict resolution, communication, organization, and time management (Tucker, McCarthy, Hoxmeier, & Lenk, 1998). Smith (1994) also attributed community service with preparing youth for adulthood by allowing them to learn more about their communities and how they can make a difference by their participation.

The Close Up Foundation (1995) published Standards of Quality for School-Based and Community-Based Service-Learning and discussed the subtle differences and the many commonalities of the two. Their purpose is to express that both programs will benefit by understanding the language, objectives, interests and issues faced by the other. They advocate schools and community agencies work together for common goals.

A direct result of community service, according to the Foundation, is that “young

people are no longer passive recipients, rather they are active service providers.

Additionally, the perception of youth moves from being a cause of problems to perhaps being a source of solutions” (p. 1). They view community service as a powerful tool for youth development.

The Foundation goes on to say that only when community service is combined with formal school-based education, does it become service-learning. In this context, teachers and youth development professionals can employ a variety of teaching strategies to actively engage students.

While the Foundation recognizes the two terms are used interchangeably, they are not synonymous. Community service can and often is a powerful experience for youth, but community service only becomes service-learning when deliberate efforts are made to link the service to stated academic objectives. And, when there is conscious effort to allow reflection on the service experience.

The implementation of service-learning in the classroom is not a strict regimen, either. Variances will occur, based on the settings, the personalities involved, the school administration, or other factors. There are, however, ten basic steps that generally are accepted by most practitioners. The dynamics of service-learning afford flexibility and thus not all of the steps may be implemented, or to the same degree or in the same order. These steps are at best, a guideline.

Step 1: Assess the needs and resources of your community and school;

Step 2: Form community partnerships;

Step 3: Set specific educational goals and curriculum;



Step 4: Select a project and begin preliminary planning;

Step 5: Plan the project in detail;

Step 6: Acquire necessary funding and resources;

Step 7: Implement and manage project;

Step 8: Organize reflection activities;

Step 9: Assess and evaluate your service program;

Step 10: Celebrate achievements.

In all these steps, it is critical to involve youth (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2002, p. 10).

Whatever the definition, legislative reform over the past 10 years has set in motion a growing national emphasis on increasing students' involvement with their local communities and linking this service to academic study through service-learning. The National and Community Service Act of 1990, through the Serve America program, and the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, through the Learn and Serve America program, provided support for service-learning activities in elementary and secondary schools (Corporation for National Service, 1999). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was signed into law by President George W. Bush in January, 2002. The Act encourages service-learning to be funded and implemented in America's public schools (Billig & Brown, n.d.).

President George W. Bush stated in his August 31, 2002 radio address, "Young people have the energy and determination to do important work, and volunteer service can teach them valuable lessons about

responsibility, community, and selflessness at an early age. I urge our teachers and schools to begin service projects and activities in September, and to make this new school year the start of a lifelong habit of service to others (Learn and Serve America, 2003, p. 2).

The provisions of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1990, also called the National Service Act of 1990, encourage schools to develop service-learning programs. Section 106 of the bill authorized the Secretary of Education to make grants available to States to plan and build the State's capacity for implementing statewide, school-based, service-learning programs. Provisions of the funding include pre-service and in-service training, curriculum development, forming local partnerships, and establishing outreach plans. Section 107 authorized a \$35,000,000 appropriation for the year 1991, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 1992, 1993, and 1994. The States could then make grants available to assist local partnerships so long as they included one local educational agency and at least one local government agency, or community-based organization, one institution of higher learning or a private nonprofit organization.

President Clinton created AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National Service in 2003 to expand opportunities for Americans to serve their communities. It was during his legislation that Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), a program sponsored by President Johnson in 1964, moved into the AmeriCorp program. The first class of AmeriCorp volunteers was 20,000 strong serving more than 1,000 communities. In 1998, with the fifth class of AmeriCorp volunteers, the number exceeded 100,000. A study

funded by the IBM Foundation, the Charles A. Dana Foundation, and the James Irvine Foundation determined that every federal dollar invested in AmeriCorps resulted in \$1.60 to \$2.60 or more in direct, measurable benefits to AmeriCorp members and the communities they serve (Corporation for National Service, 1999).

National support for youth involvement in community affairs was the focus of America's Promise, a national effort announced publicly at the President's Summit for America in 1997. America's Promise – The Alliance for Youth pledged to mobilize people from every sector of American life in an effort to build the character and competence of our nation's youth (Walker & Carlson, 2001). In it, were Five Promises:

- Mentor – ongoing relationships with caring adults – parents, mentors, tutors, and coaches.
- Protect – safe places with structured activities during nonschool hours.
- Nurture – a healthy start.
- Prepare – a marketable skill through effective education.
- Serve – an opportunity to give back through community service (p. 1).

America's Promise was “not a group of community-based youth workers, it was a national organization that focused on increasing awareness, motivating communities to action, and stimulating corporations to make resource commitments to local programs” (Floyd & Sauer, 2001, p. 22). The 4-H Youth Development Program played a role as a national partner in America's Promise and committed to involve 300,000 youth in direct community service from 1997 to 2000.

Service-learning provides community based organizations that have traditionally

sponsored and promoted service as a link to schools. Likewise, schools have the opportunity to link with the community-based organizations. Together, students benefit by having experiences that enrich the classroom work and at the same time foster civic responsibility and addressing real community needs (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2002).

### Benefits of Service Activities

Conclusive research on the benefit of service activities is difficult to obtain due to the diversity of service activities. Not only are the type of activities diverse, but also the number of hours a youth is involved; the quality of the experience is varied, as is the amount of connection to academic studies. Adding to the diversity of the experience are the manners in which the data has been collected. Most data has been gathered from evaluation studies and few, though some, have been conducted on multiple sites at the state and national level. Experimental designs using randomized assignments to treatment groups are rare (Fiske, 2002). Billig (2000) highlights four broad categories where service-learning has shown to be beneficial – academic learning, civic responsibility, personal/social development, and career exploration.

In recent years, the youth development field has recognized the value of community in service-learning and youth development. One particular project underway is a partnership between National 4-H Council and the Innovation Center for Community and Youth development. “The project is based on several key principles gained from participation in service activities: building youth-adult partnerships, generating broader civic engagement, and contributing to ongoing community building work” (Spangler &

Teter, 2002, p. 5).

Participation in service-learning activities gives youth a sense of belonging in a society where adults may not recognize their contributions. They become aware of community issues and are involved in determining a path toward understanding and/or solving the problem in some cases. The youth gain a much stronger appreciation for people and situations that are outside their personal comfort zone. And, the communities gain the benefit of the services (Schine, 1990).

The adult-youth partnerships provide an opportunity for both parties to learn from one another. It is not a mentor program, where the adult is seen as the one with all the answers, but rather a situation where both individuals are valued because of their unique experiences, resources, skills, and perspectives, regardless of age (Des Marais, Yang, & Farzanehkia, 2000).

Service activities also bring students together from diverse ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups. It enables students to give back to their communities and create positive partnerships between students and adults (Kirby, 1989).

Participation in service does more than benefit the youth and the individual recipients of the service. Even though service activities may be viewed as way to enhance the sense of responsibility in youth, to increase their sense of caring and empathy for others, it does more. Hedin and Conrad (1991) attribute service activities with also benefitting the greater community. The youth component of service activities provides a unique contribution to the necessary problem-solving process and strategies.

The most prominent benefit to service-learning is that students have the

opportunity to connect their experiences with real-life situations through the reflective process (Stafford, 2001). Through service-learning, students can discover the possibility and the importance of simultaneously attending to their needs as individuals and as members of a community. Problem-based learning, collaborative learning, undergraduate research, critical thinking, multiculturalism and diversity, civic awareness, leadership skills, and professional and social responsibility – these are just a few items on the contemporary academic agenda that naturally ally themselves with service-learning programs (DeVitis, Johns, & Simpson, 1998).

When properly conducted, community service participation may reduce the alienation from society that adolescents often experience, help young people to develop community-oriented attitudes, and encourage them to become engaged in democratic processes, such as voting, when they are young adults. In addition, students engaged in community service activities demonstrated increased problem solving abilities compared to other groups of students (Conrad and Hedin, 1991).

Adolescents who help to care for young children, who assist people with disabilities, serve in soup kitchens, tutor their peers, visit the aging, assist shut-ins, improve a playground, clean up a stream, or advocate for the homeless are filling the void that our age of technology has created in their lives (Schine, 1990).

Billig's (2000) review of a decade of service-learning activities in K-12 schools pointed out that the research, though not complete, is beginning to build a case for the impact that practitioners believe to be true. The research is limited due to the lack of consistency, the programs evaluated vary greatly in implementation, the evaluation tools

vary and research methodology may or may not include control groups.

Many of the studies used self-reports and information gathered from questionnaires following service activity participation. Eyler (2000) laments that the research being conducted is often not the best measure of skills gained by students. The traditional reliance on self-reporting for learning, application of knowledge, and use of critical thinking skills is inadequate. Eyler argues that self-reporting does not adequately measure complex cognitive gains that are expected from service-learning, and may even confuse satisfaction with learning. The use of scales as a measurement tool may not provide an adequate means of evaluating problem-solving abilities or the cognitive development that occurs as a result of service activities. Eyler further advocates the use of hands-on evaluation methods that allow students to demonstrate that they have increased their understanding of complex issues, they can apply the knowledge to a situation, and they have an understanding of problem-solving methods and strategies. Kelsey, Pennington, & Wall (2003) found that the quantitative and the qualitative data did not match when study participants used self-evaluation instruments.

Even so, Billig (2000) reported that “Service-learning has a positive effect on the personal development of public school youths,” “Students who participate in service-learning are less likely to engage in ‘risk’ behaviors,” and “Service-learning has a positive effect on students’ interpersonal development and the ability to relate to culturally diverse groups” (p. 660-661).

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation in 2000 appointed a National Commission on Service-Learning (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2002). One goal of

the Commission was to examine the state of service-learning in the Nation's schools. The study involved an assessment of K-12 school-based programs conducted between 1994 and 1997 in the Learn and Serve America service-learning program. Findings indicate that the effects of service-learning include:

- increased student engagement;
- improved academic achievement;
- improved thinking skills;
- improved character;
- improved social behavior;
- stronger ties to school, communities and society;
- exposure to new careers;
- positive school environments;
- stronger community groups; and
- increased community support for schools (pp. 14-15).

The Commission noted that these results occur when the design and implementation of service-learning projects include:

- a tie to particular educational goals and learning standards;
- a sustained effort, a minimum of 40 hours in a school year is suggested;
- a facilitated discussion of and reflection on the service and civic principles involved; and
- giving students real choices in the planning, implementation and assessment of the projects (p. 9).



When the United States Department of Education (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999b) asked school administrators why they supported community service or service-learning activities, over 60% responded “to help students become more active members of the community,” “to meet real community needs or foster relationships between the school and surrounding community,” and “to encourage student altruism or caring for others.” These were just the three highest ranked responses. Another 51% cited “to increase student knowledge and understanding of the community.” Personal values such as “to reduce student involvement in risk behavior” and “to improve student achievement in core academic courses” were important to less than 15% of the administrators (p. 10).

Studies show that when service-learning is directly connected to curriculum, students have improved scores on achievement tests, complete homework more often and show increased attendance and reduced drop out rates. “In the country’s effort to create world-class learning in American primary and secondary schools, students must be motivated and energized to meet the set standards” (Fiske, 2002, p. 4). Service activities may be the vehicle to get their interest and attention.

In the Commission’s Final Report, General Colin Powell, Founding Chairman of America’s Promise, articulated it well, “Service-Learning is a particularly fertile way of involving young people in community service, because it ties helping others to what they are learning in the classroom. In the process, it provides a compelling answer to the perennial question: ‘Why do I need to learn this stuff?’” (Fiske, 2002, p. 2).

Another benefit of participation in service activities that is becoming increasingly

important to youth is the desire to use these activities as a means of building strong resumes and applications for college entrance. All things equal, the applicant with service experience will have an edge (Saftner, 1998).

Several studies have shown the long-term impact associated with youth volunteering in their communities. The Independent Sector's *Giving and Volunteering in the United States* 2001 national survey found that those who were involved as youth are more involved as adults (Independent Sector, 2003). The survey indicated that youths' experiences shape their lifelong attitudes toward being involved. Specific benefits of volunteering for youth respondents included: having an impact and making a difference; feeling important and being successful; and seeing the good things nonprofit organizations do. They also found that today's youth are more involved than ever, creating a tremendous opportunity to cultivate a new generation of involved people.

The Gallup Organization conducted a study on teen volunteer behaviors in 1996 for the Independent Sector and found that teens volunteer for myriad reasons. Responses by teen volunteers included: (a) compassion toward people in need; (b) doing something for a cause important to them; (c) gaining a new perspective on things; (d) by helping others, they will be helped; and (e) volunteering is important to the people I respect (Independent Sector, 1996).

Longitudinal data collected by Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee (2000) compared student participants in course-based community service (service-learning), student participants in other forms of community service and a control group not participating in any form of service. The study examined eleven different dependent

measures.

Service participation showed significant positive effects in all outcome measures. These measures included academic performance, values, self-efficacy, leadership and plans to participate in service after college. Service participation showed the greatest effect on the student's decision to pursue a career in a service field. Positive results for self-efficacy and leadership were borderline (i.e.,  $p < .05$ ). This research was conducted with 22,236 college undergraduates as a means to determine the comparative effects of service-learning and community service and to explore how service enhances learning. This same research found that four service-learning students in five felt that their service "made a difference" and that they were learning from their service experience.

Schine (1990) urged caution with "one-shot" service experiences. Singing carols at a nursing home or delivering coats to a shelter, while they may, indeed, have value, they may not foster caring attitudes and behaviors. The caring attitudes and behaviors are what promote learning and growth. Schine encouraged this level of activity as a stepping stone toward becoming involved in service in greater depth in the future. Generally speaking, Schine asserts that the realization that one can make a difference in their community or if the idea is to develop lifelong civic responsibility, is more likely to occur with some level of ongoing involvement.

#### Reflection as an Integral Component

One of the primary differences between community service and service-learning is the reflection component. Service-learning has grown by 3,600% from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s (Shumer & Cook, 1999). Community service activities have increased as

well, but not so significantly. Why the interest in service learning?

What is reflection? The term “reflection” is derived from the Latin term *reflectere* – meaning “to bend back.” In the context of service-learning, reflection is a “process that allows the people doing the service to bend the metaphorical light of their experiences back onto their minds – to make careful considerations about what their experiences were all about: what did they see, who did they meet, why is there a need for such services in the first place, etc.” (Reed & Koliba, 1995, p. 1). “Reflection is the framework in which students process and synthesize the information and ideas they have gained through their service experience and in the classroom” (Close Up Foundation, 1995, p. 3).

Shumer (2001), in *The Center*, a publication of The Center for 4-H and Youth Development at the University of Minnesota states, “while improving conditions in the short term, community service and charity do little to affect the systemic issues that create the need. There is also little mutuality in volunteerism and community service – the benefit flows primarily from the server to the served. Experience without reflection and learning, does not automatically lead to growth and long term-change for either server or those served” (p. 50).

Research conducted with college undergraduates by Astin et al. (2000) supports the reflection component. In their research, both qualitative and quantitative results suggest that providing students with an opportunity to process the service experience with each other is a powerful component of both community service and service-learning. This same study emphasized the power of reflection as a means of connecting the service

experience to the academic course material.

Service-learning provides opportunities for learning and also for building a foundation upon which to learn from new experiences. To do this, one must discover the meaning of the experience, be able to use the skills of inquiry to re-interpret and apply the experience to their own life. McMillan (2000) cites David Kolb's model of experiential learning and how reflection is integral to taking an experience and processing it such that there is relevance for the experiences that will follow. Reflection is thus the critical phase in experiential learning and must happen before the learner can develop new perspectives, exhibit changes in behavior, and develop new skills and concepts.

Eyler & Giles (1999) report that studies examining impact of quality differences in service-learning have found that programs with more opportunity for reflection, substantive links between coursework and service, and ethnic and cultural diversity have a stronger impact. Areas of measurement in these studies have included personal qualities such as efficacy, interpersonal skills, reduced stereotyping, and sense of commitment to the future.

Stafford's research with Texas 4-H members (2001) found a significant difference in the participants' self-perceived skills as contributors to the community. The research examined participants that completed a service project without a reflection component versus those participants who had an opportunity to reflect, in both verbal and written form. Those members who completed the reflection component had a higher score on contributor to the community. In this research, the reflection component proved to be a significant factor, at least for some of the scales being measured.

The Standards Committee of the Alliance for Service-Learning (Close Up Foundation, 1995) have listed eleven essential elements that when incorporated into service-learning programs will yield positive evaluation and reflection of the experience. One of these critical factors is preparation and reflection.

Reflection, according to Reed and Koliba (1995) provides insight into a person's own self-interests when they reflect on how their service had an impact on their own life. Reflection allows one to develop growth and understanding in several areas including: career exploration, social change/justice, civic responsibility, leadership development, intellectual pursuit, spiritual fulfillment, professional development, and political consciousness.

Although reflection can play an important role, other factors must be considered in the success or demise of a service project. According to Schine, (1990) the type of service, the way the young person is received at the placement site, and the kinds of tasks and responsibilities he or she assumes are among the factors that will determine the power of the experience. Of equal importance are the setting, the preparation the young people receive, the provision for ongoing reflection and learning, the quality of adult leadership, and the recognition and appreciation accorded the young volunteer.

The difficulty with reflection is often that students do not value the activity (Conrad & Hedin, 1987). For this they encourage a structured reflection, that if conducted appropriately, will yield: academic learning, personal development and program improvement. A means of structuring the reflection that may yield better outcomes is to structure the process outside of the classroom. Conduct the reflection activity in the

community within the learning component. While there may be challenges it also provides opportunity for the students to see their learning as directly linked to their service experience.

Reflection, to be effective, must be facilitated and not just lead. According to the *Facilitating Reflection: A Manual for Leaders and Educators* by Reed and Koliba (1995), a facilitator relinquishes control of the process at hand to the group and encourages open dialogue among all group participants. They distinguish leadership as something you do to a group while facilitation is done with the group. Effective facilitators must demonstrate open-minded attitude and possess an ability to communicate appropriately while managing group dynamics.

The atmosphere for the reflection process is important as well. The management of group dynamics will play a large role. First, the space should be safe and comfortable in order to have open and honest reflection from participants. Facilitators must manage disagreements, this is often handled by pre-determined and agreed upon ground rules. Enforcement of the ground rules is essential. The facilitator's role is also to promote equality and encourage participation from all. Finally, the facilitator may be required to identify opinion leaders within the group and at times, encourage them to entertain other opinions, if they are dominating the group one way or another.

Furco and Billig in 2002 lamented that the current research does not clearly indicate which type of service activity provides the most effective learning experience. Yates and Youniss (1999) cited that there is testimony of participants indicating a positive influence of service in their lives, but that quantitative findings have not been conclusive.

The longitudinal study of Astin et al. found that both the quantitative and qualitative data suggests that processing the service experience adds to the service activity. Reflection serves as a means to connect the service experience to the academic course material. Eyler (2000) summed the current research situation on reflection, “We know reflection is a good thing – but we don’t know how to structure reflection and integrate it with service to maximize learning – or what that learning might look like” (p. 2).

### Leadership Life Skills

What is leadership? What are leadership life skills? Are leaders born or are they made? These are questions often asked in leadership education programs. “The good news is that today there is general agreement that leadership can be learned,” (Watt, 2003, p. 2). Watt goes on to say that even though leadership behaviors are basically subconscious, teaching leadership can and should be utilized in order to bring the subconscious to the conscious level.

*4-H in Century Three*, published in 1973, provided planning by State 4-H Leaders for the National 4-H program (Howard, 2001). One of the key findings of this document was the realization that 4-H programs were not just about providing knowledge, skill, and understanding of subjects. The role of 4-H was also to build socially desirable life skills in youth. Life skills were defined as the acquisition of characteristics, traits, skills, values, attitudes, and abilities deemed desirable by parents and community. Himsl (1973) provided the first recognized definition of life skills: “Life skills means problem solving behaviors appropriately and responsibly applied in the management of one’s



personal affairs” (p. 201).

In 1997, The Search Institute surveyed approximately 100,000 children between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade from 213 towns in the United States. The youth participating in the survey were purposefully sampled, being identified by school administration as having higher than average grade performance, involvement in extracurricular activities and social interaction. The purpose of the survey was to identify common themes in the children’s characteristics that might contribute to their success. From the 100,000 surveyed, forty common themes emerged. Thus, The Forty Developmental Assets model was developed (Scales & Leffert, 1999).

Hoopfer (1981) took Miller’s (1979) four general areas of life skills development:

1. learning to learn;
2. maintaining or acquiring positive self-concept;
3. relating to others; and
4. coping with physical, social, economic, and political systems (p. 1)

and modified them to include:

1. communication;
2. decision making;
3. getting along with others;
4. learning;
5. management;
6. understanding self; and

## 7. working in groups (p. 5).

In both of these models, the elements relate to the learning that takes place in 4-H and other youth development programs.

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 (Iowa State 4-H Youth Development, 2003). Iowa State University Cooperative Extension uses the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model to provide a way to simplify coordination of life skill development with ages and stages tasks so programs can be developmentally appropriate and more effective in achieving identified outcomes. In the model, a skill is defined as a learned ability to do something well. Life skills are abilities that individuals can learn that will help them to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life.

The TLS Model is divided into four sections, using the four H's of the 4-H Clover: Head, Heart, Hands and Health. Two general categories of skills are included under each of the four major headings. The principle basis of the TLS model is to provide youth programmers with general terminology inclusive of all possible life skills to use in developing curricula. Though there is not complete agreement on the specific life skills needed by youth, it is agreed that these skills are learned through experience. Mastery of a life skill is achieved only after repetitive practice.

Teaching leadership or allowing students to experience leadership opportunities in a traditional school setting is what some would say is an alternative vision for change within the "mainstream" of contemporary education. Shanker (1988) of the American

Federation of Teachers reported that the standard definition of school deprives students from experiencing “real world” contact with the skills and ideas they will need to explore life’s possibilities. Programs such as Outward Bound are being used in inner city schools to allow students experiences relevant to their own lives. A primary objective of these programs is to teach leadership and to enhance self esteem in the students (Proudman, 1991).

These Outward Bound programs are modifications of the original program founded in Europe some 50 years ago. Traditionally, programs focused on development of individual potential and teamwork through an extended adventure-based education experience at sea or in the wilderness. According to Buchanan (1992) today’s Outward Bound programs in urban settings are more likely to offer more long-term sequential programs in partnership with schools rather than the one-shot expedition in a pristine natural setting.

The Middle School Leadership Initiative in Boston is such an example. In this experience students are first taught the principles of leadership theory through hands-on activities, they explore and identify leaders familiar to them and they analyze the traits of leaders. To further the theories of leadership, students are next involved in activities to demonstrate their knowledge of leadership. Students engage in low and high ropes course activities to build trust in others, develop teamwork, take risks, and help others. A strategic component of the Outward Bound urban experience is to have students use these learned leadership skills in the conduct of community service activities. Through these experiences students learn that leadership is not just for a sport figure or some recognized

television personality, leadership is within themselves. They learn that they have the power to make decisions, and that they can be involved in changing the community around them (Burkhardt, 1991).

Defining leadership is a difficult task. Leadership theories have shifted from one explanation to another throughout history with Brungardt (1996) listing five major theories: trait, behavioral, situational, power-influence, and transformational. Crawford, Brungardt, and Maughan (2000) express frustration when they state “leadership theorists have struggled with one basic concept: the definition of leadership” (p.1).

Historically, many of our leaders were of the “heroic” leadership philosophy. In this philosophy one individual, capable of inspiring and influencing others to solve problems and achieve goals, is placed in the critical position, while all others are viewed as deficient. Sandmann and Vandenberg (1995) argue that this philosophy of leadership will not work in today’s world of complex problems that are inherent in communities and organizations.

Hoopfer (1990) urges Cooperative Extension to partner with other agencies and communities to provide an environment where young people can grow into productive adults. In this effort, leadership is more of a shared power, focused on building the community through partnerships instead of competition. The leadership should be team-based and be inclusive rather than exclusive and allow for co-creativity.

For the Common Good: A Strategic Plan for Leadership and Volunteer Development (Michael, 1994) states that a goal is community-based, action-oriented programming; three out of five themes presented include leader and volunteer

development for the public well-being, community ownership, and civic action.

In this new era of leadership where group involvement is emphasized over the individual, the assumption is that all have leadership qualities that can be pooled and drawn upon as needed, when working with others on vital common issues. Through community service activities, youth learn that leadership transcends many environments and that the skills they experience and learn will be a valuable skill throughout their lives (Buchanan, 1992).

Programs developed to teach leadership principles with youth should include twelve core principles, according to Woyach (1996). These 12 principles are the result of a Delphi study conducted with twenty-five leading practitioners of youth leadership programs. Of these twelve, five are specifically related to the content and delivery of the program. Principle 1, the program should help youth learn specific knowledge and skills related to leadership. Respondents felt the most effective way to gain leadership competence was through sharing knowledge and applying identifiable skills. Principle 2 calls for programs to be experientially based and provide opportunity for genuine leadership. Experiential learning was uniformly supported by the study group. Therefore, leadership development programs should engage students and allow them to take risks and experience mistakes. Principle 3 seeks to involve youth in collaborative experiences, teamwork, and networking with peers. The group agreed that youth leadership development should emphasize the importance of teamwork and allow networking among peers. Everyone, not just a few, should have opportunity to experience leadership situations. Principle 4 includes youth interaction in significant relationships with mentors,

positive role models, or other caring adults. The role of adult is seen as teacher and motivator. The group recognized that although there are risks with adult-youth partnerships, the collaboration between the two can play a critical role in leadership development. Principle 5 encourages diversity and sensitivity through understanding and tolerance of other people, cultures, and societies. Leaders face many challenges as they try to bridge the differences deriving from culture, social divisions, and technical specialization. They will require expertise in communication skills, ability to solve problems and to resolve conflict.

The National Service-learning Clearinghouse in 1995 identified four main areas of benefit for service-learning participants as reported in Shumer & Belbas, 1996. Among these four was life skills, along with basic education, vocational education and participant development. According to Sanderson (1988) a direct outcome of involvement in service-learning as a volunteer is: “(1) reinforcement of learning and encouragement of leadership development, and (2) it multiplies the outreach and impact of Extension professionals” (p. 58).

Many youth programs promote the development of leadership through involvement in community service activities. Individual youth volunteer to help out others without any association to a formal school program or out-of-school organization, thus demonstrating their leadership (Safrit & Auck, 2003).

Zeldin and Camino (1999) use the term “youth leadership programming” as the experiences, both highly structured and informal, that allow young people to develop leadership competencies. These competencies include, but are not limited to, listening to

others, building relationships with others, taking risks, accepting personal responsibility, teamwork and problem solving (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998).

Seevers and Dormody (1995) used a 30-indicator Youth Leadership Life Skills Development Scale (YLLSDS) developed previously to evaluate the perceived leadership of 400 senior 4-H members. Students ranked leadership activities that they felt contributed the most to their personal leadership development. In order, these activities were: holding office, teaching younger members, fairs, livestock shows, judging contests, demonstrations, public speaking, and community service.

Another aspect of their research was to determine the level of involvement the youth had and how that contributes to the development of leadership life skills. The choices were: planning, implementing, or evaluating for each of the top three activities previously ranked. Results indicated that the largest percentage, 88.2%, was in implementing. Evaluating activities yielded 69.7% of the respondents while only 49.7% indicated they were involved in planning leadership activities.

### Role of 4-H Youth Development

What is 4-H?

4-H is the name of Extension's youth development efforts. 4-H, then, is the learning laboratory where young people, under the guidance and mentoring of at least one caring adult, explore the world and develop the life skills necessary for the successful transition from childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood" (Astroth, 2003, p. 4).

What is 4-H youth development? 4-H Youth Development uses experiential, research-based educational opportunities that help youth become competent, caring, confident, connected, and contributing citizens of character. The National 4-H Strategic Plan (National Strategic Directions Team, 2001) called for a broad definition that would be recognized throughout the Cooperative Extension System. This statement was approved July 9-10, 2002 at a quarterly meeting of the National 4-H Leadership Trust. The statement includes definitions of three critical elements:

1. Youth development – the natural process of developing one’s capacities;
2. Positive youth development – occurs from the intentional process that promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, relations and the support to fully participate;
3. 4-H Youth Development Programs – provide just such opportunities, relationships, and support for youth to help them acquire the life skills necessary to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood.

4-H youth development is not just about projects. The 4-H program must constantly change to meet the needs of youth and the communities where they live. 4-H programs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century also must focus on research-based strategies that promote positive youth development. As a result, youth build relationships with adults, youth develop marketable skills for lifelong success, youth transform communities through service activities, youth accept and appreciate diversity and



volunteers and staff build skills and abilities enabling their ability to work with youth (King, 2002).

Does 4-H membership make a difference? To gather the perceptions about the benefits of the 4-H Youth Development program, a nation-wide study was conducted in 1999-2000. “Feedback from a total of 2,467 youth and 471 adult respondents nationwide revealed that young people and adults believe that 4-H Youth Development Programs reflect very positively the critical elements that researchers identify as essential to positive growth and development” (National 4-H Impact Assessment Project, 2001, p.5). Service to community and others was one of the eight identified critical elements. The study found that 91% of youth and 98% of adults agreed that adults and youth work together as a team and that community service has always been a part of the 4-H program. In regard to learning, 84% of the youth felt that 4-H can help them solve problems on their own. Ninety percent of the youth surveyed agreed with the statement, “4-H teaches me to help other people.”

Specifically, the 4-H National Impact Study identified the following eight critical elements that are essential for positive youth development. Having a positive relationship with a caring adult; the adult may serve as a mentor, guide and/or role model. A welcoming environment that encourages youth to feel they belong and that offers encouragement through specific and positive feedback. Opportunity, through hands-on experience, to develop mastery and competence in chosen subject matter areas. As shown above, service to community allows youth

to see how they can make a difference for others and their communities. Provide emotionally and physically safe environments through training and development opportunities for adult volunteers and staff. Provide opportunities for youth to develop and demonstrate self-determination. Youth should not feel that “life just happens” and that it is out of their control. Engagement in learning such that youth can connect what they are learning today to their future. While involved in hands-on learning, youth develop important life skills essential to careers and avocations. Finally, there needs to a connection to the future and that youth feel they are going to be part of that future (p. 5).

So, how did 4-H measure up for these eight critical elements? According to the National 4-H Impact Assessment Project (2001):

1. Caring Adults: Much research points to a caring adult being a strong element in positive youth development. Our survey found strong agreement with both youth and adults that adults in 4-H made young people feel good about themselves.
2. Safe Places: Ninety-four percent of youth and 98% of adults agreed that in 4-H, youth feel safe to try new things. Ninety-three percent of youth agreed that “I feel safe when I do 4-H activities.”
3. Learning: This research shows that 4-H is open to new learning. Over 88% of the youth feel that they can try new or different things. Eighty-four percent of youth feel that 4-H can help them solve problems on their own.

4. Service: Ninety-one percent of youth and 98% of adults agreed that adults help youth to work with others as a team. Community service has always been an important component of 4-H with adults and youth working together with community organizations. One youth said, “I learned how to do community work and now I like it.”

5. Responsibility: Ninety percent of kids surveyed agreed with the statement “4-H teaches me to help other people.” Furthermore, they felt that “4-H teaches me to be responsible for my own actions.”

6. Belonging: Ninety-two percent of both youth and adults agreed with the statement that “All kinds of kids are welcome in 4-H.” Ninety percent of kids agreed that “4-H helps me to accept differences in others.” Ninety-four percent agreed that gender made no difference in that “both boys and girls can be leaders in 4-H” (p. 5-6).

This research sought to answer the question, “What positive outcomes in youth result from the presence of critical elements in a 4-H experience?” This research was the first national attempt to address these issues.

The critical element, helping others, in a Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) revealed that for this variable, type of program had a significant impact. 4-H members in club and special interest groups had higher mean scores, followed by school enrichment and after-school programs. Gender and age also showed significance for the variable helping others. Females scored higher than males and younger respondents scored higher than older youth. Tenure in 4-H reflected a positive correlation and yielded higher mean

scores as tenure increased (National 4-H Impact Assessment Project, 2001).

Boyd, Herring, & Briers (1992) conducted a study of Texas youth in 1990 to assess and compare the leadership skills development of 4-H Club members and youth never having been part of a 4-H Club experience. The survey instrument examined 21 leadership life skills statements and were grouped into five measurement scales: working with groups, understanding self, communicating, making decisions, and leadership. Results of a t-test analysis indicated that 4-H Club members had a significantly higher perceived level of leadership skills versus the non-4-H youth, for each of the five measurement scales and overall.

Within the two groups, 4-H youth reported higher skills development in working with groups and understanding self. Leadership received the lowest rating of the five, for the 4-H youth. Non-4-H youth reported higher skills development in understanding self and working with groups. Again, leadership received the lowest rating of the five. In a second part of the survey, Boyd et al. (1992) determined that as a youth's participation level in 4-H activities increased, so did their perceived leadership skills. Activities included in the correlation analysis included serving as an officer, committee chair or member, serving on 4-H Council, participating in method demonstrations, public speaking and judging contests.

A study of New York youth found that 4-H Club membership and participation promoted the development of positive assets (Rodriguez, Hirschl, Mead, & Goggin, 1999). The "Members Only" survey showed statistically significant differences for the following assets: leadership, conflict resolution, communication, self-confidence, ability

to make healthy choices, knowledge of nutrition and food safety, and record keeping. While community service activities accounted for a large portion of the 4-H Club experience, the activities often go unrecognized and valued by the general public.

Experiential learning is the focus of 4-H as members participate in projects where they “learn by doing.” Whereas 4-H was founded 100 years ago in an economy dominated by agricultural interests, today’s 4-H program offers curriculum and projects in science and technology and many other topics to reach the diverse youth population. Its participants reflect the diversity of America, with 30 percent of 4-H youth representing minority populations. Also, 35 percent of youth in 4-H reside in the nation’s cities and suburban areas, whereas only one in 10 members live on America’s farms (National 4-H Council, May 2002).

Experiential learning such as this is echoed by sentiments of such famous individuals as Benjamin Franklin, who stated, “Tell me, and I forget, teach me, and I may remember, involve me, and I learn,” (Freeman, 2000, p. 1). David Kolb’s experiential learning cycle is a well-known model for experiential learning. In this model, reflection allows the learner to examine the experience as well as his or her own relationship with the experience. It is during this reflection phase of the cycle that learners come up with new perspectives, changes in behaviors and the development of new skills (McMillan, 2000). Since its inception, a key element of the 4-H experience has been grounding all learning in hands-on, participatory methods as opposed to didactic or passive methods. The 4-H program is, in its truest form, experiential education (Kolb, 1984).

The 4-H and Youth Development Program celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2002.

The “party” included a National Conversation on Youth Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, engaging 50,000 people of various ages and backgrounds from all 50 states and Puerto Rico. The Conversation identified specific national strategies and action steps to energize America’s youth. This conversation activity stressed the mission of 4-H, to help young people build life skills and to become productive citizens. One of the identified action steps was to expand the use of community-service learning so that each young person reaches his or her full potential (National 4-H Council, April, 2002).

4-H youth development engages young people as partners and resources rather than viewing them simply as bystanders or recipients of services. “Relevant and authentic youth participation is an essential component of the philosophy of youth development (Carleton-Hug, Keith, & Villarruel, 2002, p.1).

The New York State 4-H Youth Community Service Guide encourages youth to “just do” community service. The guide advocates service, whether it be long-term or short-term, as a means of making a difference in the community and in the lives of others. The guide includes the 4-H Youth Voices and Action Ad Council statement.

Community Service Learning strengthens the skills and knowledge 4-H’ers are acquiring by actively combining their learning with service to help meet real community needs. Every 4-H participant is encouraged to take part in community service that fits his/her areas of learning, as an important feature of 4-H youth development (Ledoux, 1997, p. 3).

4-H programs provide several examples of service-learning activities. The University of Illinois Extension program, *Walk in My Shoes*, offers a web-based

curriculum that allows youth to experience issues faced by older adults. During the course of their study they interacted with older adults to share and learn with them and to better understand them. *Free For Life: Youth Empowered to Be Tobacco Free*, a National 4-H Council curriculum, engages students in a series of lessons on tobacco prevention. In the course work, they are required to learn about issues, use their knowledge to make decisions, and to develop partnerships with adults in the creation of positive strategies to promote tobacco prevention for life in their community (Shumer, 2001).

4-H involvement does have a positive impact on youth development according to the Montana 4-H Research Summary (Astroth, 2002). The research shows that “youth who participated in 4-H for more than a year are significantly better off than youth who did not participate in the program (p. 3)”. In the 2,500 surveys completed by 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, 32% of the youth holding leadership positions were also 4-H members while only 20% of non-4-H members held positions of leadership. 4-H members are connected to the adults in their lives and reported that they would talk to their parents about important issues in their lives. Issues such as drugs saw 75% of the 4-H members versus only 64% of the non- 4-H members who would talk to parents. 4-H youth are caring and compassionate, the research shows that 72% of 4-H members are involved in activities to help others as compared to only 48% of the Non-4-H youth.

Seevers and Dormody’s (1995) findings in a 1993 study of 4-H members in Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico found that participation in many different leadership activities at a variety of levels promotes personal development as well as the opportunity to work with other youth and adults, set goals and priorities, accept responsibility, and

have a greater role in the planning, implementing, and evaluating of leadership development activities. Additionally, Seevers and Dormody found that minority youth participating in 4-H leadership activities were found to have higher youth leadership life skills development scores than non-minority members.

The 4-H program may just be that community-based organization (CBO) that Heath and McLaughlin (1994) advocate partnering with schools to provide formal and informal learning environments that together exceed what one can alone accomplish. Whereas “both schools and community-based youth organizations are dedicated to the healthy development, accomplishment, and achievement of young people” they “generally operate in isolation” (p. 292) and fail to recognize the attributes of the other”. The CBO’s provide opportunities for learning that education reformers are searching for: “learning for understanding, higher order thinking, transformational learning, for example” (p. 291). Heath and McLaughlin (1994) reiterate the notion that learning occurs not only in the school classroom, but also in the community and in the experiences that young people have with the people they interact with in their free time, of which there is ample supply.

#### Summary of Review of Literature

This review of literature focuses on the idea of youth in service to their community to develop life skills necessary to become productive citizens. The similarities and differences between the concepts of service-learning and community service are examined. The concept of reflection and the potential impact are investigated. And, finally the role of the 4-H and Youth Development Program in using service activities to target life skills development is reviewed.



Youth have been involved in service to their community throughout history. Participation in service activities has shown gains in adult-youth partnerships, civic engagement, awareness of cultural diversity, personal development and a decrease in participation in 'risk' behaviors. When service activities are directly connected to academic course work, students showed improved scores in achievement tests, improved attendance, reduced drop out rates and improved homework completion.

The definitions are not clear between service-learning and community service. Key components that distinguish the two are academic course work and having a reflection component. Service-learning typically is a more formal, structured experience directly tied to academic course work, whereas community service allows for a less formal, less structured experience. Service-learning by definition, includes structured reflection to allow participants to reflect on the service and how it impacts their personal life. Community service may not contain a reflection component. Service-learning is said to benefit both the recipient and the provider, whereas, community service is said to only benefit the recipient.

Life skills development is but one of the benefits of participation in service-learning as identified by the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse. Several models and theories of leadership exist. Service activities can be the vehicle that allows youth to explore, practice and master life skills.

The 4-H and Youth Development Program of Cooperative Extension strongly advocates youth participation in service activities as a means of developing life skills and becoming contributing members of society. Curriculum resources provide experiential

learning activities that link specific life skills with subject-matter based projects.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### Research Design

The research design used for this study was experimental. A 2 x 2 exposure to service learning (no exposure vs. exposure) by treatment (control vs reflection) between-subjects design was used to conduct the study in conjunction with the El Paso National Youth Service Day on April 12, 2003 and the District 11 4-H Leadership Lab on June 5, 2003. The experimental design allowed the researcher to make general observations about the effect of service activities on leadership life skills development. The design involved independent and dependent variables and a control and a treatment group to study the consequences of an action (Babbie, 1992).

The study was conducted to examine the effect of service activities on the perceived levels of leadership life skills in youth and whether a reflection activity had impact on the perceived levels of leadership life skills. The study was based on a review of the literature and the researcher's own knowledge of youth development and service activities. The design involved two samples, each with a control group and a treatment group. Properly assigning the subjects to groups in a random fashion allows for the dismissal of pre-testing procedures as stated by Campbell and Stanley in Babbie (1992).

The study had seven independent variables and five dependent variables. The independent variables for the study were the service experience that youth participated in during the data collection, gender, age, residence, amount of service completed, type of service previously completed, and participation in 4-H club activities.

The dependent variables for the study were the youth's scores in the following leadership life skills categories from the questionnaire developed by the researcher, based on the study by Stafford (2001): Contributor to Community, Creative Problem Solver, Effective Team Skills, Personal Leadership Development, and Self-Directed Learner.

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board. The Texas 4-H Program also reviewed and approved the study.

#### Target Population and Sample

Two samples were involved in the research. Group 1 involved sixty-nine youth participants of the El Paso National Youth Service Day, April 12, 2003. These youth were involved in a community-wide Easter Celebration for families of Fort Bliss Army personnel. The youth represented twenty different youth organizations from the El Paso community. Each organization hosted a booth or activity. Some of the activities included Easter Egg painting, musical chairs (to win Easter baskets), making confetti Easter eggs, face painting, Easter Egg hunt, pony rides and petting zoo, obstacle course and Ballet Folklorico performances. All of the youth were involved in activities prior to April 12 to collect 27,000 toiletry items for military personnel serving in Iraq. The items included 3862 tubes of toothpaste, 3850 tooth brushes, 4216 snack food items, 3617 razors, 2220 packages of baby wipes, 2541 bars of soap, 1472 rolls of toilet paper, and 956 bottles of shampoo. The youth also successfully collected 350 filled Easter baskets from area merchants to distribute during National Youth Service Day.

The second sample involved youth participants of the Texas Cooperative

Extension (TCE) District 11 4-H Leadership Lab conducted on June 5, 2003. District 11 refers to a grouping of eighteen counties located along the Texas Gulf Coast. Leadership Lab is an experientially based leadership education opportunity for 4-H youth ages 13-19. One hundred and fifty-one youth were randomly assigned to one of three different service activities in the Brenham, Texas community. Thirty-seven youth were assigned to the Brenham State School where they interacted with residents in activities such as line dancing, group games and playing bingo and other board games. Another 41 youth visited residents at area Nursing Homes to create craft items, sing songs and play interactive games. Seventy-three youth visited the Brenham Boys and Girls Club and were involved in many activities from playing basketball and volleyball with club members, to helping club members in coloring a wall mural. Other youth assisted in the construction of a storage building while others helped in building and planting a garden.

In all of the activities, both National Youth Service Day in El Paso and District 11 4-H Leadership Lab in Brenham, the youth participants had face-to-face contact with the recipients of the service activities. And, they performed the service on location with the recipients.

#### Instrumentation

The student questionnaire developed by the researcher was based on Stafford's questionnaire used with Texas 4-H members in 2001. The only modification to the instrument was in demographic questions. The same five subscales used in Stafford's research were used in this study. Stafford originally drew those questions from the Leadership Skills Inventory, developed at Iowa State University by Townsend and Carter

(1983), and Dorman (1997). Additional demographic questions were developed by Stafford based on the literature (Treffinger, 1995; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998).

The subscales used in this study were based on Stafford's research, which used the Stratford Public Schools exit outcomes to measure leadership life skills. The subscales include Effective Team Skills, Being a Self-Directed Learner, Contributor to Community, Creative Problem Solver, and Personal Leadership Development (Stafford, 2001). The following number of questions comprised each subscale: Effective Team Skills (9), Being a Self-Directed Learner (5), Contributor to Community (8), Creative Problem Solver (5), and Personal Leadership Development (6).

The participants were asked to rank their current self-perceived level of skill in each dimension using a six point Likert-type scale. The points on the scale were; A = Strongly Disagree; B = Disagree; C = Slightly Disagree; D = Slightly Agree; E = Agree; F = Strongly Agree. The letters were converted to numbers to facilitate statistical analysis; 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly Disagree; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly Agree. The level of measurement for this variable is interval.

The second part of the questionnaire was designed to determine descriptive data about the samples. Gender was measured as either male or female. Age was measured as 8-9, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15, 16-17, 18-19, and over 19 years. Residence was described as rural/farm, town less than 10,000, city between 10,000 and 50,000, suburb of city greater than 50,000, and central city greater than 50,000. Community service completed was indicated as 0, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9 or 10+ hours per month. Participants were asked to report that service as either Direct (having direct contact with recipients such as visiting a nursing

home or reading with children) or Indirect (not having direct contact with recipients such as collecting toys, food or other items, or picking up trash). 4-H membership was reported as either yes or no. Those reporting to be 4-H members were asked to report number of years of membership as either 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, or 9. Those reporting to be 4-H members were also asked to indicate their highest level of participation, as local club only, district or state. Participants were asked to indicate their involvement in other community-based youth organizations with a yes or no response. A copy of the questionnaire may be found in Appendix A.

#### Validity and Reliability

Five faculty members of the Texas A&M University Department of Agricultural Education with expertise in the field reviewed the questionnaire for face and content validity. A pilot test was not conducted for this study, rather the data from Stafford's pilot study (2001) was used. The result of the 2001 pilot indicated overall reliability for Cronbach's alpha ( $r = .90$ ). Subscale reliability estimates were also calculated: Effective team skills ( $r = .70$ ); self-directed learner ( $r = .72$ ); contributor to the community ( $r = .85$ ); creative problem solver ( $r = .76$ ); and personal leadership development ( $r = .71$ ).

The study used an experimental design with a posttest-only control group. The study included one treatment and one control group (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). There were no threats to external validity; however, mortality (the possibility of losing research participants during the experimental portion of the study) was a threat to internal validity. To minimize the threat of mortality, participants were randomly assigned to the two groups, either treatment or control. All participants were included in a drawing for prizes

to encourage participation. Considering the short-term nature of the study, mortality proved to not be a major threat. All participants completed the study (Gall et al., 1996).

Responses to the questionnaire were recorded by each youth on the instrument and manually entered into an EXCEL spreadsheet by the researcher. One questionnaire was completely omitted in data due to incomplete responses. Eight questionnaires contained missing data points. Values for missing data points were interpolated by taking the average of the reported scores on the subscale in question.

Upon conclusion of the data collection, subscale reliability estimates were calculated: Effective team skills ( $r = .84$ ); self-directed learner ( $r = .85$ ); contributor to the community ( $r = .84$ ); creative problem solver ( $r = .89$ ); and personal leadership development ( $r = .85$ ). Overall reliability was ( $r = .88$ ).

#### Data Collection

Data were collected on April 12, 2003 during National Youth Service Day in El Paso, Texas or June 5, 2003 during District 11 4-H Leadership Lab in Brenham, Texas. One month prior to each data collection, a potential participant list was generated by the coordinators of the respective event. An information letter (Appendix C & F), informed consent form (Appendix D & G), and student assent form (Appendix E & H) were mailed to the potential participants and the parents of each, for National Youth Service Day and District 11 Leadership Lab, respectively. A copy of the reflection questions were also mailed. Participants were asked to review the information and bring the informed consent and student assent forms to the event. They were assured that their responses to any questions would be kept confidential and only group data would be reported.



Prior to the data collection, the researcher held a training session with the county Extension faculty who would serve as facilitators for the experimental portion of the study. The researcher reviewed the study's objectives along with the outline of the day's activities. A sample reflection activity was conducted to provide volunteers with an understanding of the process they were to follow.

At the data collection for the two respective events, all youth entered a common room following completion of a service activity. Students brought their informed consent and student assent forms with them to the location and their name was checked off of a registration list. Upon entering the room, the researcher provided a brief overview of the study being conducted and the processes that would occur. At this time a drawing was held at each of the two locations for two phone cards, a merchant shopping card, and a restaurant gift certificate. Following that, youth were dismissed to either the control or treatment activities.

Youth were randomly assigned to one of two groups, at each location. Group assignments were made by having each youth draw a card from a box. The color of the card, either green or white, determined if they were in the treatment or control group, respectively. To ensure the random assignment of youth, two volunteers oversaw the process.

Those youth assigned to the control group proceeded to an area and individually completed the questionnaire. Youth returned the completed questionnaire to the facilitator and were dismissed.

The youth assigned to the treatment group proceeded to another area. A trained

facilitator (Texas Cooperative Extension faculty member) greeted the youth and provided instructions. The facilitator explained that they were to reflect back on their experiences of the day in preparation of answering 13 related questions.

The facilitator read the first question and solicited reaction from the group. After a few rounds of discussion the facilitator instructed the youth to write their responses to the question. This sort of activity – posing the question, allowing time for verbal discussion and writing the responses continued until all questions were discussed. After completing the verbal/written portion the youth participants completed the questionnaire asking for self-perceived evaluation of leadership life skills and demographic information. When all items were completed, the youth submitted paperwork to the facilitator and were dismissed as they completed the instruments.

#### Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows 11.0 on a personal computer. This type of analysis allowed the researcher to explore and describe patterns in the data and explain why these patterns occurred. Reliability estimates were calculated using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. Results are reported in the validity and reliability section of Chapter III.

Specific analysis by objectives included:

Objective 1. Describe the population of the study by personal characteristics. Descriptive statistics generated by SPSS were used to report this research objective.

Objective 2. Describe whether service projects impact the development of leadership life

skills. Descriptive statistics generated by SPSS were used to report this research objective.

Objective 3. Describe whether having a reflection component as part of the service project makes a greater impact than a service project without reflection in the development of leadership life skills. Descriptive statistics and independent samples t-tests generated by SPSS were used to report this research objective.

Objective 4. Describe whether a relationship exists between the youth's service experience, their self-perceived leadership life skills and selected demographic characteristics. Descriptive statistics and a multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) generated by SPSS were used to report this research objective.

Objective 5. Describe whether participation in 4-H and youth development activities have an impact on self-perceived leadership life skills. Descriptive statistics and independent samples t-tests generated by SPSS were used to report this research objective.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **MAJOR FINDINGS**

The purpose of this study was to 1) describe the population of the study by personal characteristics; 2) describe whether service projects impact the development of leadership life skills; 3) describe whether having a reflection component as part of the service project makes a greater impact than a service project without reflection in the development of leadership life skills; 4) describe whether a relationship exists between the youth's service experience, their self-perceived leadership life skills and selected demographic characteristics; and 5) describe whether participation in 4-H and youth development activities have an impact on self-perceived leadership life skills.

#### **Findings Related to Objective One**

Youth participants of the El Paso National Youth Service Day and the District 11 4-H Leadership Lab were the target populations for this study. Sixty-nine National Youth Service Day participants and 151 District 11 4-H Leadership Lab participants participated in the study. In order to understand the participants in the study, descriptive statistics were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Gender, age, residence, amount of service hours, service type, and 4-H membership status were personal characteristics asked of each participant. For those participants responding positively to 4-H membership inquiry, additional questions regarding years of participation and level of participation were asked. All participants were also asked to indicate their participation in other community-based youth organizations.

The gender representation of all participants is shown in Table 1. As shown, 142

(64.5%) of the participants were female while only 78 (35.5%) were male.

**Table 1.**

*Gender Distribution of Participants in Service Activity at Either National Youth Service Day, El Paso or District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>National Youth Service Day</b>		<b>District 11 4-H Leadership Lab</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Male</b>	30	43.5	48	31.8	78	35.5
<b>Female</b>	39	56.5	103	68.2	142	64.5
				Total	220	100

Table 2 describes the age of the study participants. The age distribution ranged from 12-13 years (6.4%) to participants' whose age exceeded 19 (2.7%), 16 participants (7.3%) fell in the 18-19 years of age group. The largest percentage (44.1%) of participants was in the 16-17 year age group and another 39.5% made up the 14-15 years of age group. One hundred eighty-four participants (83.6%) were either 14-15 or 16-17 years of age at the time of the study. The six participants aged 19 and over (2.7%) all came from the El Paso National Youth Service Day.

**Table 2.**

*Age Distribution of Participants in Service Activity at Either National Youth Service Day, El Paso or District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

<b>Age (years)</b>	<b>National Youth Service Day</b>		<b>District 11 4-H Leadership Lab</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b><i>f</i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>	<b><i>f</i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>	<b><i>f</i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>
<b>12-13</b>	2	2.9	12	7.9	14	6.4
<b>14-15</b>	17	24.6	70	46.4	87	39.5
<b>16-17</b>	31	44.9	66	43.7	97	44.1
<b>18-19</b>	13	18.8	3	2	16	7.3
<b>over 19</b>	6	8.7	0	0	6	2.7
				<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 describes the residence of the participants in the study. A majority of the participants (47.7%) came from a rural/farm residence. Thirty-nine participants (17.7%) came from a town less than 10,000. Another 26 participants (11.8%) came from a city between 10,000 and 50,000. The second largest group, 21.8%, came from a central city greater than 50,000; 47 of the 48 in this group were participants of the El Paso National Youth Service Day.

**Table 3.**

*Residence Distribution of Participants in Service Activity at Either National Youth Service Day, El Paso or District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

<b>Residence</b>	<b>National Youth Service Day</b>		<b>District 11 4-H Leadership Lab</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Rural/farm</b>	9	13	96	63.6	105	47.7
<b>Town less than 10,000</b>	2	2.9	37	24.5	39	17.7
<b>City between 10,000 &amp; 50,000</b>	10	14.5	16	10.6	26	11.8
<b>Suburb of city greater than 50,000</b>	1	1.4	1	0.7	2	0.9
<b>City greater than 50,000</b>	47	68.1	1	0.7	48	21.8
				<b>Total</b>	220	100

The amount of service activities completed on a monthly average by participants is shown in Table 4. Participants were asked to mark either 0, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9 or 10 or more hours to indicate the number of hours of service completed on a monthly basis. Seventy-nine participants (35.9%) indicated they completed 1-3 hours of service activities each month. A smaller number, 65 (29.5%), indicated their participation was at 4-6 hours per month. Only 15 participants (6.8%) reported no service activity on a monthly basis, while a combined 61 (27.8%) participants reported seven or more hours per month of service activities.

**Table 4.**

*Hours of Service Activity Completed Each Month by Participants in Service Activity at Either National Youth Service Day, El Paso or District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

<b>Hours/month</b>	<b>National Youth Service Day</b>		<b>District 11 4-H Leadership Lab</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>0</b>	2	2.9	13	8.6	15	6.8
<b>1-3</b>	14	20.3	65	43	79	35.9
<b>4-6</b>	15	21.7	50	33.1	65	29.5
<b>7-9</b>	15	21.7	12	7.9	27	12.3
<b>10+</b>	23	33.3	11	7.3	34	15.5
				<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 describes the type of service activity completed by participants on a monthly basis. Participants were asked to describe the level of their service activity as either more than 50% direct (i.e. visiting a nursing home, reading to children), more than 50% indirect (collecting food, toys or other items for distribution, picking up trash), or does not apply. Ninety-one youth (41.4%) indicated they were participating in activities that provided direct interaction with the recipients. A larger percentage, 52.3% (115 participants) were participating in activities that yielded indirect contact with recipients. A small portion, 6.4%, (14 participants) responded they had not participated in service activities, and therefore answered 'does not apply'.



**Table 5.**

*Type of Service Completed by Participants in Service Activity at Either National Youth Service Day, El Paso or District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

<b>Type of Service</b>	<b>National Youth Service Day</b>		<b>District 11 4-H Leadership Lab</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Direct help</b>	40	58	51	33.8	91	41.4
<b>Indirect help</b>	28	40.6	87	57.6	115	52.3
<b>Does not apply</b>	1	1.4	13	8.6	14	6.4
				<b>Total</b>	220	100

Participants were asked to indicate if they were or were not members of a 4-H club program. Table 6 describes the two populations' response to this question. One hundred sixty-five of the participants (75%) indicated they were currently members of a 4-H Club organization. Fourteen participants (20.3%) at National Youth Service Day in El Paso reported that they were members of 4-H, while 55 (79.7%) responded negatively to the question. Not surprisingly, 100% (151 participants) of the District 11 4-H Leadership Lab participants responded positively to the question.

**Table 6.**

*4-H Member Status of Participants in Service Activity at Either National Youth Service Day, El Paso or District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

<b>4-H member?</b>	<i>National Youth Service Day</i>		<i>District 11 4-H Leadership Lab</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Yes</b>	14	20.3	151	100	165	75
<b>No</b>	55	79.7	0		55	25
				<b>Total</b>	220	100

Table 7 describes the number of years of 4-H membership held by participants. Fifty-five participants (25.0%) indicated in a previous question that they were not members of a 4-H club organization. The remaining 75% of the participants ranged from 1-2 years of membership to 9 years of membership. Fifty-six participants (25.5%) responded that they had been members of a 4-H organization for 5-6 years. Following closely behind that was 54 participants (24.5%) who indicated membership of 7-8 years. Eleven and 15 participants, (5.0% and 6.8% respectively) indicated membership of 1-2 years and 3-4 years. The remaining 29 youth (13.2%) indicated their 4-H membership had been consistent for 9 years.

**Table 7.**

*Years of 4-H Membership of Participants in Service Activity at Either National Youth Service Day, El Paso or District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

<b>Years in 4-H</b>	<b>National Youth Service Day</b>		<b>District 11 4-H Leadership Lab</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>0</b>	55	79.7	0	na	55	25
<b>1-2</b>	4	5.8	7	4.6	11	5
<b>3-4</b>	3	4.3	12	7.9	15	6.8
<b>5-6</b>	4	5.8	52	34.4	56	25.5
<b>7-8</b>	0	na	54	35.8	54	24.5
<b>9</b>	3	4.3	26	17.2	29	13.2
				<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100</b>

Participants were asked to indicate their highest level of participation in the 4-H organization, either as local club only, district or state. Table 8 describes the population's response to this question. Fifty-five participants (25.0%) indicated in a previous question that they were not members of a 4-H club organization. The remaining 75% were evenly distributed in three groups. Fifty-eight participants (26.4%) indicated their participation was at the local club only, 64 (29.1%) responded their highest level of participation to be at district and 43 (19.5%) indicated they participated at the state level.

**Table 8.**

*Level of 4-H Participation by Participants in Service Activity at Either National Youth Service Day, El Paso or District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

<b>Level of Participation</b>	<i>National Youth Service Day</i>		<i>District 11 4-H Leadership Lab</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>0</b>	55	79.7	0	na	55	25
<b>Local club only</b>	6	8.7	52	34.4	58	26.4
<b>District</b>	0	na	64	42.4	64	29.1
<b>State</b>	8	11.6	35	23.2	43	19.5
				<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100</b>

Finally, participants were asked to indicate their membership in other community-based organizations. Responses are shown in Table 9. One hundred seventy-one of the participants (77.7%) responded positively to the question, indicating that they were a member in another community-based youth organization. Only 49 of the participants (22.3%) responded negatively, that they were not members of another community-based organization.

**Table 9.**

*Membership in Other Community-based Youth Organizations by Participants in Service Activity at Either National Youth Service Day, El Paso or District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

<b>Membership in Other Community-based Youth Organization</b>	<i>National Youth Service Day</i>		<i>District 11 4-H Leadership Lab</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Yes</b>	50	72.5	121	80.1	171	77.7
<b>No</b>	19	27.5	30	19.9	49	22.3
				<b>Total</b>	220	100

#### Findings Related to Objective Two

The second objective was to describe whether service projects impact the development of leadership life skills in youth. Youth participants in this study were part of either the National Youth Service Day conducted in El Paso on April 12, 2003 or the District 11 4-H Leadership Lab conducted in Brenham on June 5, 2003. Participants were asked to respond to thirty-three statements describing leadership life skills in the following five areas: 1) Effective Team Skills; 2) Creative Problem Solver; 3) Personal Leadership Development; 4) Self-Directed Learner; and 5) Contributor to Community.

Analysis of objective two was achieved by computing descriptive statistics on each of the thirty-three questions and further grouping the five subscales and computing descriptive statistics on the groups. The questionnaire included a Likert-type scale to record participants' responses to the thirty-three statements. The scale contained six

potential responses: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly Disagree; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly Agree.

Table 10 shows the individual questions and descriptive data for the Effective Team Skills subscale. Seventy-eight percent of all the respondents either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” to seven of the nine statements. However, only 59% responded with “agree” or “strongly agree” to the statement, “I can keep written records.” Similarly, only 69% responded with “agree” or “strongly agree” to the statement, “I trust other people.” These two statements received the lowest overall scores in this subscale. Mean scores for participants were 5.02 ( $SD = 0.59$ ,  $Min = 2.56$ ,  $Max = 6.0$ ) for the nine questions combined.

Table 11 shows the five individual questions and descriptive data for the Creative Problem Solver subscale. Seventy-four percent of all the respondents either “slightly agreed” or “agreed” with all five statements. Only 15% responded “strongly agree” to the combined five statements. The statement “When solving a problem, I generate many possible solutions before making a decision,” received 152 (69%) “slightly agree” or “agree” responses, the lowest frequency of the five statements. The statement, “I solve problems in ways they have never been solved before, “ received 173 (79%) “slightly agree” or “agree” responses, the highest frequency of the five statements. Creative Problem Solver had the lowest overall mean, 4.57,  $SD=0.66$ ,  $Min=1.80$ ,  $Max=6.0$ .

**Table 10.**

*Level of National Youth Service Day and District 11 4-H Leadership Lab Participants' Agreement with Effective Team Skills Statements, 2003, n=220*

<b>Effective Team Skills</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>		<b>Disagree</b>		<b>Slightly Disagree</b>		<b>Slightly Agree</b>		<b>Agree</b>		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
I cooperate with others.	0	0	3	1.4	6	2.7	27	12.2	101	45.7	83	37.6
I can get my ideas across to others.	1	0.5	3	1.4	8	3.6	43	19.5	100	45.2	65	29.4
I accept other people as they are.	1	0.5	2	0.9	3	1.4	28	12.7	100	45.2	86	38.9
I can get along with others who are different from me.	1	0.5	0	0	8	3.6	17	7.7	103	46.6	91	41.2
I encourage others.	0	0	1	0.5	5	2.3	29	13.1	96	43.4	89	40.3
I can keep written records.	6	2.7	15	6.8	25	11.3	45	20.4	81	36.7	48	21.7
I can follow directions.	0	0	0	0	5	2.3	33	14.9	93	42.1	89	40.3
I trust other people.	3	1.4	5	2.3	14	6.3	47	21.3	89	40.3	62	28.1
I can lead a discussion.	4	1.8	5	2.3	9	4.1	38	17.2	92	41.6	72	32.6
	16	0.8	34	1.7	83	4.2	307	15.5	855	43.2	685	34.6

Note: Scale 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly Disagree; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly Agree; Scale Score for Participants,  $M=5.02$ ,  $SD=0.59$ ,  $Min=2.56$ ,  $Max=6.0$

**Table 11.**

*Level of National Youth Service Day and District 11 4-H Leadership Lab Participants' Agreement with Creative Problem Solver Statements, 2003, n=220*

Creative Problem Solver	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I solve problems in ways they have never been solved before.	3	1.4	8	3.6	28	12.7	89	40.3	84	38	8	3.6
When solving a problem, I generate many possible solutions before making a decision.	2	0.9	4	1.8	13	5.9	49	22.2	103	46.6	49	22.2
I follow a process to solve a problem.	6	2.7	12	5.4	12	5.4	75	33.9	80	36.2	35	15.8
I consider all choices before solving a problem.	0	0	5	2.3	6	2.7	55	24.9	113	51.1	41	18.6
I clearly define a problem before generating possible solutions.	2	0.9	6	2.7	14	6.3	66	29.9	99	44.8	33	14.9
	13	1.2	35	3.2	73	6.6	334	30.4	479	43.5	166	15.1

Note: Scale 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly Disagree; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly Agree; Scale Score for Participants,  $M=4.57$ ,  $SD=0.66$ ,  $Min=1.80$ ,  $Max=6.0$

Table 12 shows the six individual questions and descriptive data for the Personal Leadership Development subscale. This subscale had the highest overall mean, 5.24 ( $SD=0.51$ ,  $Min=2.50$ ,  $Max=6.0$ ) of the five. Eighty-six percent of all the respondents replied “agree” or “strongly agree” to all six statements. Another 11% responded with “slightly agree” to all six statements. Ninety-seven percent of all respondents indicated “slightly agree”, “agree” or “strongly agree” to all six statements. Less than 1% responded with “strongly disagree” or “disagree” for all six statements.

Ninety-two percent responded “agree” or “strongly agree” to the statement,



“Serving others helps me grow as a leader.” While only 78% responded “agree” or “strongly agree” to the statement, “I am positive about my abilities.”

The most frequent response, 53% was “strongly agree” for the statement, “I learn from others.” Forty-nine percent responded “agree” to the statements, “Helping others increases my awareness of other’s needs,” and “Serving others helps me grow as a leader.”

Table 13 shows the five individual questions and descriptive data for the Self-Directed Learner subscale. Eighty-two percent of the respondents indicated “agree” or “strongly agree” to all five statements. Ninety-six percent of the respondents indicated “slightly agree,” “agree,” or “strongly agree” to all five statements. Only 1% of the respondents indicated “strongly disagree” or “disagree” with the five statements. The overall mean of 5.16 ( $SD=0.55$ ,  $Min=2.80$ ,  $Max=6.0$ ) indicates a favorable response to the Self-Directed Learner subscale.

**Table 12.**

*Level of National Youth Service Day and District 11 4-H Leadership Lab Participants' Agreement with Personal Leadership Statements, 2003, n=220*

<b>Personal Leadership</b>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Slightly Disagree</i>		<i>Slightly Agree</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>	
	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Helping others increases my awareness of other's needs.	1	0.5	4	1.8	3	1.4	21	9.5	107	48.4	84	38
I learn from others.	0	0	0	0	4	1.8	20	9	80	36.2	116	52.5
I am positive about my abilities.	1	0.5	2	0.9	6	2.7	38	17.2	100	45.2	73	33
I can be a leader when I serve other's needs.	0	0	0	0	7	3.2	17	7.7	95	43	101	45.7
Serving others helps me grow as a leader.	0	0	0	0	1	0.5	16	7.2	107	48.4	96	43.4
I feel comfortable acting as a leader when helping others.	1	0.5	3	1.4	8	3.6	30	13.6	89	40.3	89	40.3
	3	0.2	9	0.7	29	2.2	142	10.8	578	43.8	559	42.3

Note: Scale 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly Disagree; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly Agree; Scale Score for Participants,  $M=5.24$ ,  $SD=0.51$ ,  $Min=2.50$ ,  $Max=6.0$

**Table 13.**

*Level of National Youth Service Day and District 11 4-H Leadership Lab Participants' Agreement with Self-Directed Learner Statements, 2003, n=220*

Self-Directed Learner	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I use past experiences when I am learning something new.	0	0	2	0.9	4	1.8	23	10.4	100	45.2	91	41.2
I like to discover new knowledge on my own.	1	0.5	3	1.4	11	5	40	18.1	92	41.6	73	33
I understand the significance to life of what I learn.	2	0.9	2	0.9	4	1.8	41	18.6	97	43.9	74	33.5
I learn more when I am involved in the planning process of the learning experience.	0	0	1	0.5	5	2.3	32	14.5	103	46.6	79	35.7
I enjoy learning when my experiences pertain to real life.	1	0.5	0	0	3	1.4	18	8.1	94	42.5	104	47.1
	4	0.4	8	0.7	27	2.5	154	14.0	486	44.2	421	38.3

Note: Scale 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly Disagree; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly Agree; Scale Score for Participants,  $M=5.16$ ,  $SD=0.55$ ,  $Min=2.80$ ,  $Max=6.0$

While overall, 82% of the respondents indicated “agree” or “strongly agree” to all six statements, only 78% had the same response for the statement, “I understand the significance to life of what I learn.” Similarly, only 75% had the same responses for the statement, “I like to discover new knowledge on my own.” The statement, “I enjoy learning when my experiences pertain to real life” received 47%, the highest number of “strongly agree” responses in this subscale.

Table 14 shows the eight individual questions and descriptive data for the Contributor to Community subscale. The overall mean, 5.21 ( $SD=0.59$ ,  $Min=3.25$ ,

*Max=6.0*) was the second highest of the five subscales, indicating a very favorable response. Eighty-three percent of all respondents indicated “agree” or “strongly agree” to all eight statements. Ninety-six percent of all respondents indicated “slightly agree,” “agree,” or “strongly agree” to all eight statements. Less than 1% responded “strongly disagree” or “disagree” with all eight statements. The statement, “Helping others has influenced the way I live my life,” received the lowest percentage, 76% of “agree” and “strongly agree” responses. The remaining seven statements showed 82% or more of the respondents with “agree” or “strongly agree” marked.

The statement, “I can make a difference in my community,” received the highest frequency (105) of “strongly agree” responses. Forty-seven percent of the youth marked this response. Another 46% responded similarly for the statement, “Having a chance to serve makes me a stronger part of my community.” The statement, “Serving others helps me better understand my community,” showed a 47% response rate for “agree”.

**Table 14.**

*Level of National Youth Service Day and District 11 4-H Leadership Lab Participants' Agreement with Contributor to Community Statements, 2003, n=220*

Contributor to Community	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I feel a responsibility to serve my community.	0	0	1	1	4	2	33	15	98	44	84	38
Helping others influences how I live my life.	1	0.5	4	2	8	4	39	18	91	41	77	35
Having a chance to serve makes me a stronger part of my community.	0	0	1	1	3	1	27	12	87	39	102	46
Community service makes me think about real life in new ways.	0	0	5	2	5	2	28	13	84	38	98	44
Serving others helps me better understand my community.	0	0	2	1	4	2	32	15	103	47	79	36
I can make a difference in my community.	1	0.5	0	0	3	1	17	7.7	94	43	105	48
I will continue to volunteer after high school.	0	0	0	0	7	3	30	14	88	40	95	43
A leader should be required to serve his/her community.	2	0.9	0	0	11	5	22	10	91	41	94	43
	4	0.2	13	0.7	45	2.6	228	13.0	736	41.8	734	41.7

Note: Scale 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly Disagree; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly Agree; Scale Score for Participants,  $M=5.21$ ,  $SD=0.59$ ,  $Min=3.25$ ,  $Max=6.0$

The five subscale means ranged from a high of 5.24, Personal Leadership Development, to a low of 4.57, Creative Problem Solver. Contributor to Community had an overall mean of 5.21; Self-Directed Learner, 5.16; and Effective Team Skills, 5.02.

One hundred sixteen (53%) of the respondents “strongly agreed” with the statement, “I learn from others.” This statement had the highest frequency of such responses. The second highest frequency (105) of “strongly agree” responses were reported for the statement, “I can make a difference in my community.” Forty-eight percent of the youth indicated “strongly agree” with this statement.

#### Findings Related to Objective Three

The third objective sought to describe whether having a reflection component as part of the service project makes a greater impact than a service project without reflection in the development of leadership life skills. An independent samples t-test comparing the means of each of the five subscales, Effective Team Skills, Creative Problem Solver, Personal Leadership Development, Self-Directed Learner and Contributor to Community, yielded no significant difference between the reflection (treatment) and no reflection (control) groups. The presence of a reflection component to the service activity did not significantly increase leadership life skills in the participants as shown in Table 15.

**Table 15.**

*The Impact of Reflection in the Development of Leadership Life Skills by Participants in a Service Activity at National Youth Service Day, El Paso and District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

	<i>Control: no reflection</i>		<i>Treatment: with reflection</i>		<i>t-value</i>	<i>Sig</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<b>Creative Problem Solver</b>	4.63	0.68	4.49	0.62	1.55	0.123
<b>Personal Leadership Development</b>	5.28	0.46	5.19	0.58	1.4	0.162
<b>Self-Directed Learner</b>	5.2	0.54	5.1	0.57	1.27	0.206
<b>Effective Team Skills</b>	5.06	0.55	4.98	0.64	0.98	0.328
<b>Contributor to Community</b>	5.24	0.56	5.15	0.63	1.14	0.255

\*p<.05

#### Findings Related to Objective Four

The fourth objective of the study was to describe whether a relationship exists between the youth's service experience, their self-perceived leadership life skills and selected demographic characteristics. The service experience refers to whether the service activity was more than 50% direct contact or more than 50% indirect contact or no service activity. Direct contact was defined as directly interacting with the people being impacted by the service. Examples include visiting nursing homes, mentoring or tutoring children, or serving meals to the homeless. Indirect service was defined as those activities where the youth had no direct contact with the recipient of the service. Examples include food or clothing drives or cleaning the roadside of trash.

Service experience also refers to the number of hours a youth contributes to service activities on a monthly basis. Youth reported their prior service hours as 0, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9 or 10 or more hours per month.

Self-perceived leadership life skills refer to the five dependent variables: Effective Team Skills, Creative Problem Solver, Personal Leadership Development, Self-Directed Learner and Contributor to Community. Selected demographics include gender, age, and treatment.

A (Multiple Analysis of Variance) MANOVA was used to determine the differences between the five dependent variables and selected independent variables. The use of MANOVA reduces the chance of a Type I error when trying to determine if several groups differ on more than one dependent variable (Gall et al.). The results of the MANOVA are shown in Table 16. Only number of prior service hours and service type showed a significant difference. Gender, age and treatment did not show a significant difference on the development of leadership life skills.

Independent samples t-tests and an analysis of variance (ANOVA) were computed on each of the independent variables, for which a significant difference was found: service type and number of service hours. Post hoc analysis using Tukey's LSD was computed to determine which means were greater and if there was significance.



**Table 16.**

*The Impact of Gender, Age, Treatment, Number of Service Hours and Service Type in the Development of Leadership Life Skills by Participants in a Service Activity at National Youth Service Day, El Paso and District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Wilks' Lambda</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig</b>
<b>Gender</b>	1	0.966	1.48	0.197
<b>Age</b>	6	0.987	0.54	0.743
<b>Treatment</b>	1	0.982	0.75	0.588
<b>Number of Service Hours</b>	4	0.914	3.95	.002*
<b>Service Type</b>	1	0.928	3.27	.007*

\*p<.05

The ANOVA for service type is shown in Table 17. For each of the five dependent variables, the mean for direct contact was greater than indirect contact and no service activity. This indicates that respondents with service activities involving direct contact with the clients had a higher self-perceived value on the five leadership life skills than did those respondents that had indirect contact or no service activities at all.

Post hoc analysis of the ANOVA using Tukey's LSD showed significance within the five leadership life skills as shown in Table 17 for service type. For all five variables, direct contact was significantly greater than indirect contact. Direct contact was also significantly greater than no service activity. However, in all five variables, indirect contact was not different than no service activity. The effect size for each is shown in Table 18.

**Table 17.**

*The Impact of Service Type in the Development of Leadership Life Skills by Participants in a Service Activity at National Youth Service Day, El Paso and District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

Service Type	Direct		Indirect		No Service Activity		Sig
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
<b>Creative Problem Solver</b>	4.70 <sup>a</sup>	0.58	4.51 <sup>b</sup>	0.65	4.20 <sup>b</sup>	0.99	.012*
<b>Personal Leadership Development</b>	5.45 <sup>a</sup>	0.43	5.12 <sup>b</sup>	0.53	4.94 <sup>b</sup>	0.4	.000*
<b>Self-Directed Learner</b>	5.30 <sup>a</sup>	0.51	5.07 <sup>b</sup>	0.57	4.94 <sup>b</sup>	0.5	.005*
<b>Effective Team Skills</b>	5.20 <sup>a</sup>	0.48	4.93 <sup>b</sup>	0.62	4.62 <sup>b</sup>	0.7	.000*
<b>Contributor to Community</b>	5.42 <sup>a</sup>	0.55	5.08 <sup>b</sup>	0.58	4.81 <sup>b</sup>	0.39	.000*

\*p<.05

Note: Means not sharing a letter are different as determined by Tukey's LSD post hoc comparison.

The effect size, Cohen's *d*, comparing direct service to indirect service was small (Cohen, 1988) for Creative Problem Solver (.31); medium for Self-Directed Learner (.43) and Effective Team Skills (.49); and large for Personal Leadership Development (.68) and Contributor to Community (.60). The effect size, Cohen's *d*, for each of the five variables comparing direct service to no service activity was .62, 1.23, .71, .97 and 1.28, indicating a large effect size for this construct (Cohen, 1988) for each of the variables.

**Table 18.**

*The Effect Size of the Impact of Service Type in the Development of Leadership Life Skills by Participants in a Service Activity at National Youth Service Day, El Paso and District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

<b>Service Type</b>	<b><i>Direct vs. Indirect</i></b>	<b><i>Direct vs. No Service Activity</i></b>
	<b><i>d</i></b>	<b><i>d</i></b>
<b>Creative Problem Solver</b>	.31	.62
<b>Personal Leadership Development</b>	.68	1.23
<b>Self-Directed Learner</b>	.43	.71
<b>Effective Team Skills</b>	.49	.97
<b>Contributor to Community</b>	.60	1.28

Post hoc analysis of the ANOVA using Tukey's LSD showed significance within the five leadership scales as shown in Table 19 for hours of service. In all five of the leadership life skills, 7-9 hours per month of service activity had a significantly greater mean than 0, 1-3 and 4-6 hours per month. Ten hours per month of service had a significantly greater mean than 0, 1-3 and 4-6 hours for Personal Leadership and was only significantly greater for 0 and 1-3 hours for Self-Directed Learner, Effective Team Skills and Contributor to Community. Personal Leadership Development and Self-Directed Learner showed significant difference for 4-6 hours of service over 0 hours of service.

This indicates that as the hours of youth service increases, on a monthly average, the perceived leadership life skills rating also increases. In all five leadership skills subscales 0 hours and 1-3 hours of prior service did not show a significant difference. Attitudes about Personal Leadership Development and Self-Directed Learner showed

significance at the 4-6 hours of prior service activity level. The effect size measuring the magnitude of the difference is shown in Table 20.

**Table 19.**

*The Impact of Service Hours in the Development of Leadership Life Skills by Participants in a Service Activity at National Youth Service Day, El Paso and District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

Hours	0		1-3		4-6		7-9		10+		
Type	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	Sig
<b>Creative Problem Solver</b>	4.40 <sup>a</sup>	0.7	4.48 <sup>a</sup>	0.7	4.60 <sup>ab</sup>	1	4.84 <sup>b</sup>	0.5	4.60 <sup>ab</sup>	0.9	0.1
<b>Personal Leadership Dev.</b>	4.87 <sup>a</sup>	0.4	5.11 <sup>ab</sup>	0.5	5.25 <sup>b</sup>	1	5.53 <sup>c</sup>	0.5	5.47 <sup>c</sup>	0.4	.000*
<b>Self-Directed Learner</b>	4.80 <sup>a</sup>	0.6	5.02 <sup>ab</sup>	0.6	5.16 <sup>bd</sup>	0	5.51 <sup>c</sup>	0.3	5.34 <sup>cd</sup>	0.6	.000*
<b>Effective Team Skills</b>	4.65 <sup>a</sup>	0.8	4.92 <sup>ac</sup>	0.7	5.05 <sup>bc</sup>	1	5.28 <sup>b</sup>	0.4	5.17 <sup>b</sup>	0.5	.002*
<b>Contrib. to Comm.</b>	4.88 <sup>a</sup>	0.4	4.99 <sup>a</sup>	0.6	5.23 <sup>b</sup>	1	5.60 <sup>c</sup>	0.3	5.44 <sup>bc</sup>	0.7	.000*

\*p<.05

Note: Means not sharing a letter are different as determined by Tukey's LSD post hoc comparison.

The Cohen's *d*, or effect size comparing 0 hours versus 4-6 hours for Self-Directed Learner is .85 indicating a large effect size (Cohen, 1988). Effective Team Skills and Contributor to Community had effect sizes of .40 and .46 respectively indicating a medium effect size for the construct when comparing 0 hours and 4-6 hours of service. The significance in all five variables when comparing 0 hours and 7-9 hours had an effect size, Cohen's *d*, of .72 or greater indicating a large effect size for this construct (Cohen,

1988). Similarly, four of the five variables had effect sizes, Cohen's  $d$ , greater than .78 when comparing 0 hours and 10 or more hours of service.

**Table 20.**

*The Effect Size of the Impact of Service Hours in the Development of Leadership Life Skills by Participants in a Service Activity at National Youth Service Day, El Paso and District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

<b>Hours</b>	<b>0 vs 4-6</b>	<b>0 vs 7-9</b>	<b>0 vs 10+</b>
<b>Type</b>	<b><math>d</math></b>	<b><math>d</math></b>	<b><math>d</math></b>
<b>Creative Problem Solver</b>		.72	
<b>Personal Leadership Development</b>		1.46	1.50
<b>Self-Directed Learner</b>	.85	1.50	.90
<b>Effective Team Skills</b>	.40	1.00	.78
<b>Contributor to Community</b>	.46	2.04	.98

#### Findings Related to Objective Five

The fifth objective of the study was to describe whether participation in 4-H and youth development activities have an impact on self-perceived leadership life skills. An independent samples t-test was used to compare the means on the five leadership life skills for 4-H members (n=165) and non-4-H members (n=55). Descriptive statistics showed the means for non-4-H members to be higher for all five of the leadership life skills subscales. 4-H membership had a significant impact on only one life skill, Personal Leadership Development ( $t(1,217) = -2.252, p < .05$ ). This is shown in Table 21. Non-4-H members had significantly higher Personal Leadership Development skills than 4-H

youth. The effect size of 0.36 for Personal Leadership Development is small (Cohen, 1988) indicating that while statistically significant, it is not readily visible.

Additional analyses were computed to examine differences within the 165 youth participants with 4-H membership. Table 22 shows the results of an independent samples t-test to compare the means on the five leadership life skills for gender. Within the 165 participants, females had higher means for all scales except Creative Problem Solver. The only statistically significant difference was seen in Personal Leadership Development and Effective Team Skills. The effect size, Cohen's *d*, for Personal Leadership Development was .34 indicating a small (Cohen, 1988) effect size for this construct. Effective Team Skills also had a small Cohen's *d*, effect size of .39.

**Table 21.**

*The Impact of 4-H Membership in the Development of Leadership Life Skills by Participants in a Service Activity at National Youth Service Day, El Paso and District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=220*

Variable	4-H?	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>Sig</i>
<b>Creative Problem Solver</b>	yes	4.55	0.68			
	no	4.62	0.60	-0.742	0.11	0.459
<b>Personal Leadership Development</b>	yes	5.2	0.51			
	no	5.38	0.50	-2.252	0.36	0.025*
<b>Self-Directed Learner</b>	yes	5.13	0.57			
	no	5.25	0.49	-1.398	0.23	0.163
<b>Effective Team Skills</b>	yes	4.99	0.60			
	no	5.12	0.55	-1.397	0.23	0.164
<b>Contributor to Community</b>	yes	5.18	0.59			
	no	5.28	0.58	-1.114	0.17	0.267

\*p<.05

**Table 22.**

*4-H Member Participants: The Impact of Gender in the Development of Leadership Life Skills in a Service Activity at National Youth Service Day, El Paso and District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=165*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>		<b>Sig</b>	<b>d</b>
	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>		
<b>Creative Problem Solver</b>	4.56	.75	4.55	.65	.914	
<b>Personal Leadership Development</b>	5.09	.47	5.26	.52	.043*	.34
<b>Self-Directed Learner</b>	5.03	.54	5.17	.59	.141	
<b>Effective Team Skills</b>	4.86	.53	5.06	.62	.039*	.39
<b>Contributor to Community</b>	5.10	.52	5.22	.63	.248	

\*p<.05

One way ANOVA were computed on the 165 4-H members to determine the impact of age, level of participation, and years of 4-H membership on the development of leadership life skills. Results of the ANOVA and Post hoc analysis using Tukey's LSD are in Tables 23, 24 and 25 respectively. Age, as reported in Table 23, did not show a significant difference.

Within 4-H members, years of 4-H participation had a significant impact on the Personal Leadership Development subscale as seen in Table 24. One-two years of membership yielded significantly higher means than 3-4 years; 7-8 years was greater than 3-4; and 9 years of 4-H membership yielded higher means than both 3-4 and 5-6. This indicates that the longer a young person is engaged in 4-H club membership, their perceived skills in Personal Leadership Development increase.

**Table 23.**

*4-H Member Participants: The Impact of Age in the Development of Leadership Life Skills by Participants in a Service Activity at National Youth Service Day, El Paso and District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=165*

Age	12-13		14-15		16-17		18-19		Sig
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
<b>Creative Problem Solver</b>	4.50	.62	4.55	.72	4.54	.63	4.92	.94	.667
<b>Personal Leadership Development</b>	5.08	.43	5.12	.52	5.28	.51	5.57	.32	.079
<b>Self-Directed Learner</b>	4.94	.52	5.11	.55	5.16	.60	5.32	.52	.504
<b>Effective Team Skills</b>	4.67	.76	4.97	.56	5.05	.60	5.33	.38	.088
<b>Contributor to Community</b>	4.99	.59	5.16	.54	5.20	.65	5.63	.39	.218

\*p<.05

Table 25 shows the impact of the level of participation by 4-H members and the impact on the development of leadership life skills. Level of participation is defined as Local club only, District or State. The only scale to show significant difference is the Contributor to Community. Within that scale, State level participation yielded a greater mean than Local club only participation.



**Table 24.**

*4-H Member Participants: The Impact of Years of 4-H Membership in the Development of Leadership Life Skills by Participants in a Service Activity at National Youth Service Day, El Paso and District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=165*

Years of 4-H Membership	1-2		3-4		5-6		7-8		9		Sig
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
<b>Creative Problem Solver</b>	4.35 <sup>a</sup>	1.04	4.45 <sup>a</sup>	.64	4.53 <sup>a</sup>	.71	4.54 <sup>a</sup>	.66	4.74 <sup>a</sup>	.50	.450
<b>Personal Leadership Development</b>	5.29 <sup>a</sup>	.65	4.90 <sup>b</sup>	.60	5.13 <sup>ab</sup>	.46	5.24 <sup>a</sup>	.51	5.37 <sup>ac</sup>	.43	.033*
<b>Self-Directed Learner</b>	5.15 <sup>a</sup>	.64	4.88 <sup>a</sup>	.64	5.09 <sup>a</sup>	.59	5.16 <sup>a</sup>	.58	5.25 <sup>ab</sup>	.45	.341
<b>Effective Team Skills</b>	4.76 <sup>a</sup>	1.00	4.75 <sup>a</sup>	.57	4.97 <sup>ad</sup>	.60	5.03 <sup>a</sup>	.55	5.17 <sup>bcd</sup>	.48	.135
<b>Contributor to Community</b>	5.14 <sup>a</sup>	.74	4.88 <sup>a</sup>	.67	5.13 <sup>a</sup>	.49	5.22 <sup>ab</sup>	.60	5.36 <sup>ab</sup>	.63	.130

\*p<.05

Note: Means not sharing a letter are different as determined by Tukey's LSD post hoc comparison.

**Table 25.**

*4-H Member Participants: The Impact of Level of Participation in the Development of Leadership Life Skills by Participants in a Service Activity at National Youth Service Day, El Paso and District 11 Leadership Lab, Brenham, TX, 2003, n=165*

<b>Level of Participation</b>	<b>Local club only</b>		<b>District</b>		<b>State</b>		<b>Sig</b>
	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	
<b>Creative Problem Solver</b>	4.54 <sup>a</sup>	.59	4.51 <sup>a</sup>	.79	4.63 <sup>a</sup>	.63	.651
<b>Personal Leadership Development</b>	5.08 <sup>a</sup>	.57	5.24 <sup>a</sup>	.47	5.29 <sup>b</sup>	.46	.094
<b>Self-Directed Learner</b>	4.99 <sup>a</sup>	.57	5.21 <sup>b</sup>	.58	5.19 <sup>a</sup>	.54	.073
<b>Effective Team Skills</b>	4.89 <sup>a</sup>	.60	4.98 <sup>a</sup>	.69	5.14 <sup>b</sup>	.41	.126
<b>Contributor to Community</b>	5.05 <sup>a</sup>	.58	5.17 <sup>a</sup>	.66	5.37 <sup>b</sup>	.46	.027*

\*p<.05

Note: Means not sharing a letter are different as determined by Tukey's LSD post hoc comparison.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the effect of service projects on the development of leadership life skills in youth. It described whether service-learning with a reflection component makes a greater impact on leadership skills development than traditional community service that does not include reflection. The study also examined possible relationships between a youth's service experience, their self-perceived leadership life skills and selected demographic characteristics. Participation in the 4-H and Youth Development Program of Cooperative Extension was examined to determine if a relationship exists with self-perceived leadership life skills.

The following five objectives were identified to conduct this research:

Objective 1. Describe the population of the study by personal characteristics.

Objective 2. Describe whether service projects impact the development of leadership life skills.

Objective 3. Describe whether having a reflection component as part of the service project makes a greater impact than a service project without reflection in the development of leadership life skills.

Objective 4. Describe whether a relationship exists between the youth's service experience, their self-perceived leadership life skills and selected demographic characteristics.

Objective 5. Describe whether participation in 4-H and youth development activities have an impact on self-perceived leadership life skills.

### Summary of the Review of Literature

Service-learning is a form of experiential education whose pedagogy rests on principles established by Dewey and other experiential learning theorists early in this century (Furco, 2002). Participation in service activities has shown positive effects in measurable outcomes such as academic performance, values, self-efficacy, leadership, and plans to participate in service after college (Astin et al.).

The definitions of service-learning and community service are not clearly distinguished. Kendall & Associates (1990) alone identified 147 different terms and definitions related to service-learning. A generally accepted difference between service-learning and community service is the link to academic curriculum and the presence of a reflection component. Service-learning has the two aforementioned characteristics whereas community service does not.

The beneficiaries of the service activity may also be part of the definition. Service-learning is said to benefit both the provider and the recipient. This is contrasted with community service which may only benefit the recipient. Historical perceptions also play into the definitions. Community service may be associated with the context of criminals whose sentence includes performing some task that benefits society but may well be personally embarrassing or distasteful for the performer (Furco & Billig, 2002).

Although the research is not conclusive, the evidence exists that service activities benefit not only youth but also their communities. This evidence has resulted in continued interest on behalf of national legislation. Programs like the Peace Corps, The Points of Light Foundation, and AmeriCorps are examples of the efforts made nationally to promote

and encourage youth involvement in service to their communities. Youth involvement in community service helps young people develop community-oriented attitudes and encourages them to become engaged in democratic processes, such as voting (Conrad & Hedin, 1991).

Stafford's (2001) research with 4-H members found that having a reflection component as part of the service activity made a significant difference in the self-perceived leadership life skills of youth. This difference was seen in the Personal Leadership Development and Contributor to Community subscales. Eyler and Giles (1999) found that activities with reflection yielded a stronger impact than those without. Schine (1990) also included the type of service, attitudes toward the youth, and tasks and responsibilities of the youth as critical to the impact of the service activity. The most effective type of service activity is not clearly known (Furco & Billig, 2002, Yates & Youniss, 1999).

Teaching leadership life skills is a critical component of the 4-H and Youth Development Program of Cooperative Extension. This is achieved by using experiential, research-based educational opportunities that help youth become competent, caring, confident, connected and contributing citizens of character (National Strategic Directions Team, 2001). Service to community and others was one of eight critical elements of the 4-H youth program identified in a national study (National 4-H Impact Assessment Project, 2001). "Every 4-H participant is encouraged to take part in community service that fits his/her areas of learning, as an important feature of 4-H youth development" (Ledoux, 1997, p. 3).

### Statement of the Problem

Youth providing service to others has gained much attention with the national interest in youth service and service learning (Benson,1997). Does participation in service projects yield increased personal skills development? To what extent do youths' attitudes and behaviors change in areas such as personal and social responsibility, intent to serve, perceived ability to "make a difference," and communicating with others (Blyth et al., 1997)? Due to the increased number of service-learning programs, it is essential that more information be provided that evaluates the effectiveness of the program in developing youths' leadership life skills. If service-learning demonstrates that these skills can be attained through the process, the model will be effectively adopted by youth organizations across the nation (Stafford, 2001).

The effectiveness of the service-learning model in developing leadership life skills must be assessed before it is adopted by organizations. It is essential that youth develop leadership skills through experience, whether it happens in school or in community-based organizations. The 4-H program typically offers a non-structured opportunity for community service versus the formal structure of service-learning. Is there a difference?

Results of the study will be shared with youth leadership organizations that may be considering starting a service-learning program or want to expand on current leadership development programming.

### Delimitations

This study was delimited to include only those individuals participating in either

the El Paso National Youth Service Day, April 12, 2003 or the District 11 4-H Leadership Lab on June 5, 2003. The participants were selected randomly and volunteered to participate in the study. The instrument and experimental design used in studying the development of leadership life skills through service-learning could be used by others to aid in the assessment of their service-learning programs.

#### Summary of Methodology

The research design used for this study was experimental and was conducted to examine the effect of service activities on the perceived levels of leadership life skills in youth and whether a reflection component had impact on the perceived levels of leadership life skills.

Two samples were involved in the research. Group 1 involved sixty-nine youth participants of the El Paso National Youth Service Day, April 12, 2003. These youth were involved in a community-wide Easter Celebration for families of Fort Bliss Army personnel. The youth represented twenty different youth organizations from the El Paso community. Each organization hosted a booth or activity. Some of the activities included Easter Egg painting, musical chairs (to win Easter baskets), making confetti Easter eggs, face painting, Easter Egg hunt, pony rides and petting zoo, obstacle course and Ballet Folklorico performances. All of the youth were involved in activities prior to April 12 to collect 27,000 toiletry items for military personnel serving in Iraq. The items included 3,862 tubes of toothpaste, 3,850 tooth brushes, 4,216 snack food items, 3,617 razors, 2,220 packages of baby wipes, 2,541 bars of soap, 1,472 rolls of toilet paper, and 956 bottles of shampoo. The youth also successfully collected 350 filled Easter baskets from

area merchants to distribute during National Youth Service Day.

The second sample involved youth participants of the District 11 4-H Leadership Lab conducted on June 5, 2003. One hundred and fifty-one youth were randomly assigned to one of three different service activities in the Brenham, Texas community. Thirty-seven youth were assigned to the Brenham State School where they interacted with residents in activities such as line dancing, group games and playing bingo and other board games. Another 41 youth visited residents at area Nursing Homes to create craft items, sing songs and play interactive games. Seventy-three youth visited the Brenham Boys and Girls Club and were involved in many activities from playing basketball and volleyball with club members, to helping club members in coloring a wall mural. Some youth assisted in the construction of a storage building while others helped in building and planting a garden.

In all of the activities, both National Youth Service Day in El Paso and District 11 4-H Leadership Lab in Brenham, the youth participants had face-to-face contact with the recipients of the service activities. And, they performed the service on location with the recipients.

The student questionnaire developed by the researcher was based on Stafford's questionnaire used with 4-H members in 2001. The same five subscales were used, the only modification was the addition of demographic questions. Participants responded to thirty-three questions on the instrument using a Likert-type scale. Ten additional questions allowed for the examination of demographic variables.

The original instrument was pilot tested by Stafford in 2001 and received an overall reliability for Cronbach's alpha ( $r = .90$ ). Subscale reliability estimates were also



calculated: Effective team skills ( $r = .70$ ); self-directed learner ( $r = .72$ ); contributor to the community ( $r = .85$ ); creative problem solver ( $r = .76$ ); and personal leadership development ( $r = .71$ ).

County Extension faculty members received training prior to data collection, to act as facilitators for the reflection activity. All participants of the study participated in service activities at one of the two data collection sites: El Paso National Youth Service Day or District 11 4-H Leadership Lab, Brenham. Upon completion of the activity, participants were randomly assigned to either the control or treatment group, by drawing a colored card from a box.

Youth assigned to the control group proceeded to a room where they individually completed the questionnaire. Youth returned the completed questionnaire to the facilitator and were dismissed.

The youth assigned to the treatment group proceeded to another area. A trained facilitator (Texas Cooperative Extension faculty member) greeted the youth and provided instructions. The facilitator explained that they were to reflect back on their experiences of the day in preparation of answering 13 related questions.

The facilitator read the first question and solicited reaction from the group. After a few rounds of discussion the facilitator instructed the youth to write their responses to the question. This sort of activity – posing the question, allowing time for verbal discussion and writing the responses continued until all questions were discussed. After completing the verbal/written portion, the youth participants completed the questionnaire asking for self-perceived evaluation of leadership life skills and demographic information.

When all items were completed, the youth submitted the paperwork to the facilitator and were dismissed.

Data analysis was completed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows 11.0 on a personal computer. All participant responses were hand entered by the researcher. Data analysis included frequencies, independent samples t-tests, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA).

#### Summary of Key Findings/Conclusions for Each Objective

The effect of service activities on the development of leadership life skills are suggested in findings of this research. These findings are generalized to the youth participating in either National Youth Service Day, El Paso or District 11 4-H Leadership Lab, Brenham.

#### *Objective One*

The first objective of the study was to describe the personal characteristics of the population involved in the study. Descriptive statistics were reported using frequencies and percentages. Gender, age, residence, amount of service hours, service type, and 4-H membership status were personal characteristics asked of each participant. For those participants responding positively to 4-H membership inquiry, additional questions regarding years of participation and level of participation were asked. All participants were also asked to indicate their participation in other community-based youth organizations. Conclusions for this objective are as follows:

1. Sixty-five percent of the participants in the study were female.
2. Forty percent of the participants reported their age as 14-15 years. Forty-four

percent reported their age as 16-17. The remaining 16% were either 12-13 or 18 and older.

3. Residence was reported as rural/farm for almost half (47.7%) of the participants. Twenty two percent reported city greater than 50,000 as their residence. This does not parallel the national data provided by the National 4-H Council, May 2002. Nationally, 35% of 4-H participants reside in the nation's cities and suburban areas, while only one in ten live on farms. The population is not representative of the Texas 4-H program, either. The 2002 Annual 4-H Youth Development Enrollment Report (United States Department of Agriculture, 2002) indicated Texas 4-H enrollment included 70.5% from suburban and city residences and only 29.6% from farm, rural and town residences.

4. Thirty-six percent of the participants reported 1-3 hours of involvement in service activities on a monthly basis, 30% reported 4-6 hours per month. Less than 10% (6.8%) reported 0 hours of service on a monthly basis.

5. Fifty-two percent of the participants reported their prior service activity as indirect, having minimal contact with the recipients of the activity. Examples of this type of activity include collecting food or toys for needy, or picking up trash from roadsides. Forty-one percent of the participants reported their service activities had direct contact with recipients of the service. Examples here included reading to children, working in a soup kitchen or visiting a nursing home.

6. Seventy-five percent of the participants held membership in a 4-H club organization.

7. Fifty percent of the participants reported 5-6 years (25.5%) or 7-8 years (24.5%) of 4-H membership.

8. Twenty-nine percent of the participants reported their highest level of 4-H involvement to be on the District level. Twenty percent reported their highest level of involvement had been on the State level.

9. Seventy-eight percent of the participants reported they were involved in other community-based youth organizations. Only 22% reported no involvement.

### *Objective Two*

The second objective was to describe whether service projects impact the development of leadership life skills in youth. Participants were asked to respond to thirty-three statements describing leadership life skills in the following five areas: 1) Effective Team Skills; 2) Creative Problem Solver; 3) Personal Leadership Development; 4) Self-Directed Learner; and 5) Contributor to Community. Analysis of objective two was achieved by computing descriptive statistics on each of the thirty-three questions and further grouping the five subscales and computing descriptive statistics on the groups. Results of the data analysis revealed the following for objective two:

1. Overall, the participants rated their self-perceived leadership life skills above average. The means scores for each subscale were greater than 4.57 on a 6-point scale. Personal Leadership Development had the highest mean of 5.24, followed by Contributor to Community at 5.21, Self-Directed Learner at 5.16, Effective Team Skills at 5.02 and Creative Problem Solver had the lowest mean of 4.57.

2. Ninety-five percent of the participants responded Slightly Agree, Agree or Strongly Agree to all 33 statements. Of that 95%, 79% of the responses were either Agree

or Strongly Agree. This indicates the participants had a very positive view of their leadership skills. This data parallels Stafford (2001) where participants in a similar study rated their leadership life skills high. Specifically, 75-88% on the average, reported “agree” or “strongly agree” with the 33 statements addressing leadership life skills.

3. Analysis of the 33 individual questions revealed that the statement, “I learn from others” received the highest number (116) of “strongly agree” responses. Fifty-three percent of the participants felt they learn from others. It may be concluded that peer to peer teaching is an effective means of teaching teens.

4. Participants had a positive attitude toward diversity and acceptance of others, 45.2% and 38.9% responded “agree” or “strongly agree” respectively to the statement, “I accept other people as they are.” Similarly, 46.6% responded “agree” and 41.2% responded “strongly agree” to the statement, “I can get along with others who are different than me.” This supports the research of Kirby, 1989 and Billig, 2000. Woyach’s (1996) model of a successful leadership education program also includes attention to diversity and sensitivity to other cultures.

5. Forty-eight percent (105) of the participants responded “strongly agree” with the statement, “I can make a difference in my community.” Astin et al. reported similar attitudes. This also parallels the Independent Sector’s findings in 2003, where the benefits of youth involvement in service activities included having an impact and making a difference.

6. The subscale Creative Problem Solver revealed that participants were not positive in their attitudes of this characteristic. Eleven percent of the respondents rated

their self-perceived leadership skill in this area below average. Of the remaining 89%, only 15% strongly agreed with the five statements in this subscale. This finding parallels Stafford's 2001 research, where Creative Problem Solver skills were rated moderately low by study participants using a similar instrument. It may be concluded that teens have either not had the opportunity to practice creative problem solving or have not been taught how to do so. This finding may also relate to Eyster's (2000) findings that using a scale to evaluate problem solving abilities may not provide adequate assessment.

### *Objective Three*

The third objective sought to describe whether having a reflection component as part of the service project makes a greater impact than a service project without reflection in the development of leadership life skills. The analysis was conducted by computing an independent samples t-test comparing the means of each of the five subscales, Effective Team Skills, Creative Problem Solver, Personal Leadership Development, Self-Directed Learner and Contributor to Community. The results of this analysis are as follows:

1. No significant difference between the reflection (treatment) and no reflection (control) groups was found. The presence of a reflection component in the service activity did not significantly increase perceived leadership life skills in the participants. This finding does not support Stafford's 2001 findings, where reflection immediately following the activity significantly effected the means for Contributor to Community. Nor does this finding support the Standards Committee of the Alliance for Service-Learning (Close Up Foundation, 1995) which states that preparation and reflection are critical to a successful service-learning program.

#### *Objective Four*

The fourth objective was to describe whether a relationship exists between the youth's service experience, their self-perceived leadership life skills and selected demographic characteristics. The service experience refers to whether the service activity was more than 50% direct contact or more than 50% indirect contact or no service activity. Service experience also refers to the number of hours a youth contributes to service activities on a monthly basis. Youth reported their prior service hours as 0, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9 or 10 or more hours per month.

Self-perceived leadership life skills refer to the five dependent variables: Effective Team Skills, Creative Problem Solver, Personal Leadership Development, Self-Directed Learner and Contributor to Community. Selected demographics include gender, age, and treatment.

A multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine the differences between the five dependent variables and selected independent variables. The use of MANOVA reduces the chance of a Type I error when trying to determine if several groups differ on more than one dependent variable (Gall et al.). The results of data analysis for objective four are as follows:

1. A significant difference was seen in service type and service hours; gender, age and treatment did not show a significant difference on the development of leadership life skills, this was determined with the MANOVA. Schine (1990) makes a case that reflection is not the only factor important to the success of a service-learning program. Type of service activity plays a critical role, as this research also found.

Gender and age did show significance in the area of helping others in the National 4-H Impact Assessment Project, 2001. Females reported higher mean scores than males. Younger youth reported higher mean scores than older youth.

2. Independent samples t-tests and an ANOVA were computed on service type and number of service hours respectively. Post hoc analysis using Tukey's LSD was computed to determine which means were greater and if there was significance. Direct contact was significantly greater than indirect and no contact for all five leadership skills subscales. Schine's (1990) research supports this finding. One could conclude that providing youth with opportunities for service that had a direct contact with recipients would show an increased in perceived leadership life skills.

3. In all five of the leadership life skills, 7-9 hours per month of service activity had a significantly greater mean than 0, 1-3 and 4-6 hours per month. Again, Schine (1990) supports the notion of long term engagement in service over one-time, one-shot service experiences to effect change in attitudes and behaviors. One could conclude that as the number of average hours of service increases, so would the perceived leadership life skills.

#### *Objective Five*

The fifth objective of the study was to describe whether participation in 4-H and youth development activities have an impact on self-perceived leadership life skills. An independent samples t-test was used to compare the means on the five leadership life skills between 4-H members (75%) and non-4-H members (25%). Results of the data analysis are as follows:



1. The mean for each of five leadership skills was higher for non-4-H members than 4-H members. This finding is not supported by other research in the area of 4-H leadership life skills development (Boyd et al., 1992, Howard, 2001, Rodriguez et al., 1999, Astroth, 2002, & Ledoux, 1997).

2. Personal Leadership Development was statistically significantly different between the two groups.

3. A further analysis was done with those participants that were active 4-H members. As shown in Tables 22, 23, 24 and 25, age did not make a significant difference. However, within the 4-H members, gender showed a significant difference in the two subscales Personal Leadership and Effective Team Skills; females rated their self perceived leadership skills higher than males. This is consistent with the National 4-H Impact Assessment, 2001.

The years of 4-H membership showed a significant impact on the development of leadership life skills for the subscale Personal Leadership Development. As the number of years increased, so did the perceived level of leadership skills. This is consistent with findings of Stafford (2001), Boyd et al. (1992) and Howard (2001).

### Implications

Participants in the study generally perceived their leadership life skills to be above average. 4-H participants historically are exposed to many leadership training opportunities and may have under-rated their leadership skills. While, non-4-H participants may have over-rated their leadership skills.

The presence or absence of a reflection component in the service activity did not

have a significant effect on the perceived leadership life skills. It may be that a measurement of a one-time service activity is not enough to change the participant's existing level of leadership life skills. It may also be that the perceived leadership life skills of these participants was already at a high level. The reflection component alone may not impact leadership life skills, other factors may need to be considered as suggested by Schine (1990). Fiske (2002) also recognized that the exact cause and effect benefit of service-learning was difficult to determine due to the diversity of service activities. It may be reasonable to suggest that the service activity be tied specifically to a leadership curriculum and that the connections between the two are discussed in the reflection activity.

The type of service and the hours of service completed on a monthly basis, did however, have a significant impact on perceived leadership life skills. There is an implication that participants involved in activities that require direct contact with service recipients will perceive their leadership life skills to be higher. Similarly, those youth who participate in 7-9 or more hours of service on a monthly basis will have higher perceptions of their leadership life skills. These findings were also supported by Schine (1990).

#### Recommendations for Action

1. Utilize curriculum that allows teens teaching teens, as this research showed the most frequent response, 53% was "strongly agree" for the statement, "I learn from others." Forty-nine percent responded "agree" to the statements, "Helping others increases my awareness of other's needs," and "Serving others helps me grow as a leader."

2. Include service activities in 4-H and youth programming, with the goal of

youth participating seven or more hours on a monthly basis. This research indicated that as the hours of youth service increases, on a monthly average, the perceived leadership life skills rating also increased.

3. Encourage service activities that provide direct involvement with the recipients versus indirect involvement. “Bake and take” is nice, but one to one service yields greater benefits for the provider and the recipient. Direct service activities showed significantly different impact over Indirect service activities in this research.

4. Link 4-H project areas to the service activity; research supports the idea that the significance of the activity is increased when there is relative value seen by the service provider.

5. Utilize an evaluation instrument or methodology that includes more than self-reporting.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

1. Replicate this research project with a series of service projects over a period of time, using reflection activities throughout the process.

2. Conduct the research on service activities tied specifically to a leadership life skills curriculum; connect the service and curriculum.

3. Conduct the research utilizing a 4-H project curriculum with specific service activities for that project’s subject matter content.

4. Evaluate levels of leadership life skills utilizing instruments or methods other than self-reporting.

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## APPENDIX A

### QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this questionnaire by **circling** one response for each statement.

Use the following scale:

A=Strongly Disagree, B=Disagree, C=Slightly Disagree, D=Slightly Agree, E=Agree, F=Strongly Agree

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I solve problems in ways they have never been solved before.	A	B	C	D	E	F
2	Helping others increases my awareness of other's needs.	A	B	C	D	E	F
3	I use past experiences when I am learning something new.	A	B	C	D	E	F
4	When solving a problem, I generate many possible solutions before making a decision.	A	B	C	D	E	F
5	I feel a responsibility to serve my community.	A	B	C	D	E	F
6	I learn from others.	A	B	C	D	E	F
7	I follow a process to solve a problem.	A	B	C	D	E	F
8	Helping others has influenced the way I live my life.	A	B	C	D	E	F
9	I clearly define a problem before generating possible solutions.	A	B	C	D	E	F
Continue to next page							

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10	I am positive about my abilities.	A	B	C	D	E	F
11	Having a chance to serve makes me a stronger part of my community.	A	B	C	D	E	F
12	I can be a leader when I serve other's needs.	A	B	C	D	E	F
13	Community service makes me think about real life in new ways.	A	B	C	D	E	F
14	I cooperate with others.	A	B	C	D	E	F
15	I can get my ideas across to others.	A	B	C	D	E	F
16	Serving others helps me better understand my community.	A	B	C	D	E	F
17	I can make a difference in my community.	A	B	C	D	E	F
18	I consider all choices before solving a problem.	A	B	C	D	E	F
19	I accept other people as they are.	A	B	C	D	E	F
20	I like to discover new knowledge on my own.	A	B	C	D	E	F
21	Serving others helps me grow as a leader.	A	B	C	D	E	F
22	I can get along with others who are different from me.	A	B	C	D	E	F
23	I encourage others.	A	B	C	D	E	F
24	I understand the significance to life of what I learn.	A	B	C	D	E	F
25	I can keep written records.	A	B	C	D	E	F
Continue to next page							

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
26	I can follow directions.	A	B	C	D	E	F
27	I feel comfortable acting as a leader when helping others.	A	B	C	D	E	F
28	I will continue to volunteer after high school.	A	B	C	D	E	F
29	I trust other people.	A	B	C	D	E	F
30	I can lead a discussion.	A	B	C	D	E	F
31	A leader should be required to serve his/her community.	A	B	C	D	E	F
32	I learn more when I am involved in the planning process of the learning experience.	A	B	C	D	E	F
33	I enjoy learning when my experiences pertain to real life.	A	B	C	D	E	F

Demographics (please circle one response for each statement.)

34. Gender

- A. Male
- B. Female

35. Age (in years)

- A. 8 - 9
- B. 10 - 11
- C. 12 - 13
- D. 14 - 15
- E. 16 - 17
- F. 18 - 19

Continue to next page

## 36. Residence

- A. Rural/Farm
- B. Town less than 10,000
- C. City between 10,000 and 50,000
- D. Suburb of city greater than 50,000
- E. Central city greater than 50,000

## 37. How much community service do you complete each month? (On the average)

- A. None
- B. 1-3 hours/month
- C. 4-6 hours/month
- D. 7-9 hours/month
- E. 10+ hours/month

## 38. 50% of my service is \_\_\_\_\_ (mark one)

- A. Direct help (example: visiting a nursing home, reading to children)
- B. Indirect help (example: collecting canned goods, picking up trash)
- C. Does not apply (answered A on question #37)

## 39. Are you a member of a 4-H club?

- A. Yes
- B. No

## 40. If you answered YES to number 39, how many years have you been in 4-H?

- A. 1-2 years
- B. 3-4 years
- C. 5-6 years
- D. 7-8 years
- E. 9 years

## 41. If you answered YES to number 39, what is your level of participation? (mark the highest level)

- A. Local club only
- B. District
- C. State

Continue to next page



42. Are you a member of another community-based youth organization?

A. Yes

B. No

Thank you for participating in this study. Please turn in the questionnaire.

END 😊

## **APPENDIX B**

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

Reflection Questions: Please answer the following questions in relation to your experience with the service project you just completed.

What are some adjectives that describe your experience?

What were your feelings?

What was most rewarding?

What was the most difficult?

How did the information and skills you've learned help you?

How was the experience different from what you expected?

Why is it important to serve the community?

What issues did this experience make you think about?

What are the challenges that face us in these issues?

How has this project changed your attitudes about these issues?

What will you notice now that you didn't notice before?

What can we do individually and as a group to have more impact in this area?

What is one thing you can do next week that will make a difference?

## APPENDIX C

### COVER LETTER TO NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY (NYSD) PARTICIPANTS

March 15, 2003

Greetings!

In anticipation of participating in the El Paso National Youth Service Day scheduled for April 12, 2003, you (or your child) have the opportunity to participate in an additional service activity. This packet contains information to allow you to participate in this activity, if you (or your child) choose to do so. The activity is a study designed to examine the effect of service learning in developing leadership life skills. Service learning is simply a learning tool that adds a reflection component to the community service experience. Approximately 200 people have been selected to participate. You or your child's participation may impact future leadership programming for many youth organizations.

The study will take place during El Paso National Youth Service Day on April 12, 2003. To participate in the study, you (or your child) will need to report to the registration area on April 12, following the completion of the service activity. At this time students will be assigned to two equally numbered groups. Group A will be given a questionnaire that will ask questions pertaining to his or her perception of his or her leadership skills. This Group will then be finished with their part of the study. Group B, upon completion of the service project will go through a reflective process with trained facilitators. During this reflective time, you (or your child) will be asked to think about the service and what impact they felt. They will be asked to share their thoughts with a group facilitator and write them down in a journaling activity. Group B will then be given the same questionnaire that the previous groups had filled out. The entire process will be completed within two hours of the completion of the service project on April 12, 2003. All students participating in the study will be entered into a drawing for gift certificates from local merchants.

There are simple steps to follow if you want your child to participate in this study.

1. Read and sign the Informed Consent Form (green form) included in this packet.
2. Have your child read and sign the Student Assent form (yellow form) included in this packet.
3. **Send the two forms (green Informed Consent Form and yellow Student Assent Form) either via fax to (361) 265-9434 or send them in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. Please send the forms back by April 4, 2003.**
4. Keep the white copy of the forms for your own records.

There are simple steps to follow if you (age 18 or over) want to participate in this study.

1. Read and sign the Student Assent Form (yellow form) included in this packet.
- 2. Send the form (yellow Student Assent Form) either via fax to (361) 265-9434 or send it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. Please send the forms back by April 4, 2003.**
3. Keep the white copy of the forms for your own records.

**These forms must be completed and returned back to me by April 4, 2003 in order to participate in the study.**

The questionnaire will only be given one time and will be strictly anonymous. There will be no way to identify a questionnaire once it is turned in. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and participation may cease at any time without consequence. **Again, students participating in the study should report to the registration area on April 12, following the completion of the service activity.**

If you or your child have questions about the study please contact B. Darlene Locke, principal investigator, by telephone at (361) 265-9201 or e-mail at ([d-locke@tamu.edu](mailto:d-locke@tamu.edu)) or Dr. Barry L. Boyd, study supervisor, by telephone at (979) 862-3693 or e-mail at ([b-boyd@tamu.edu](mailto:b-boyd@tamu.edu)).

Thank you for your cooperation. You and your child's assistance are greatly appreciated. Please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

B. Darlene Locke  
Principal Investigator  
Department of Agricultural Education  
Texas A&M University

Dr. Barry L. Boyd  
Study Supervisor  
Department of Agricultural Education  
Texas A&M University

Enclosures: Informed Consent Form (green) Student Assent Form (yellow) to be faxed or sent back, Self-addressed stamped envelope, White copy of Informed Consent Form and Student Assent Form for your records (front/back copy), Reflection Questions

## APPENDIX D

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM - NYSD

#### Informed Consent Form

A Study on The Effect of Service in Developing Leadership Life Skills

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby consent to my child's participation in this research project. I understand that the Department of Agricultural Education at Texas A&M University supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following is provided for me to decide whether I wish for my child to participate in this present study.

1. I understand that the purpose of this study is to examine my child's self-perception of his or her leadership life skills upon completion of community service.
2. I understand that my child will be asked to fill out a questionnaire one time only on April 12, 2003.
3. I understand that my child may be asked to reflect on his or her community service experience by being asked a series of questions by trained facilitators.
4. I understand that my child might be asked to participate in an organized reflection activity following the completion of an organized community service project as part of the El Paso National Youth Service Day. The reflection activity will take no longer than 2 hours.
5. I understand that the questionnaire will be anonymous. My child will not be asked to identify himself or herself on the questionnaire by name.
6. I understand that approximately 200 participants will be solicited to complete the questionnaire. Of that 200, only 60 will be asked to participate in the reflection activity.
7. I understand that the results of this study may help to develop future leadership and community service programs.
8. I understand that my decision to grant permission for my child to participate in this study is given voluntarily and that he or she may deny consent or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
9. I understand that my child's name will be entered in a drawing for prizes.
10. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to let my child participate in this study.
11. I have been given a copy of this consent form for my records.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If I would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, I am free to contact the investigator by e-mail or phone at: B. Darlene Locke, Department of

Agricultural Education, Texas A&M University, [d-locke@tamu.edu](mailto:d-locke@tamu.edu), (361) 265-9201.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board Human - Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Support Services, Office of Vice President for Research at (979) 458-4067.

## APPENDIX E

### STUDENT ASSENT FORM - NYSD

#### Student Assent Form

A Study on The Effect of Service in Developing Leadership Life Skills

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that I have been chosen to participate in a dissertation study in conjunction with the 2003 El Paso National Youth Service Day. I am willing to take part in this study about service learning and leadership.

1. I understand that the purpose of this study is to examine my self-perception of my leadership life skills upon completion of community service.
2. I understand that I will be given a questionnaire about leadership and service. The questionnaire will ask questions pertaining to my self-perception of my leadership skills.
3. I understand that I may be asked a few reflective-type questions before answering the questionnaire. I have reviewed the questions included in the cover letter.
4. I understand that approximately 200 participants will be solicited to complete the questionnaire. Of that 200, only 60 will be asked to participate in the reflection activity.
5. I understand that the results of this study may help to develop future leadership and community service programs.
6. I understand that all of the information I give on the questionnaire will be strictly anonymous. I will not be asked to write my name on the survey so my privacy will be protected.
7. I understand that my name will be entered in a drawing for prizes.
8. I understand that I may refrain from answering any of the questions on the questionnaire or during the reflection process and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
9. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
10. I have been given a copy of this form for my records.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If I would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, I am free to contact the investigator by e-mail or phone at: B. Darlene Locke, Department of Agricultural Education, Texas A&M University, [d-locke@tamu.edu](mailto:d-locke@tamu.edu), (361) 265-9201.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board Human - Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Support Services, Office of Vice President for Research at (979) 458-4067.

## APPENDIX F

### COVER LETTER TO DISTRICT 11 LEADERSHIP LAB (D11LL) PARTICIPANTS

March 15, 2003

Dear parent:

We hope that your child is having a great school year and is ready to participate in the District 11 4-H Leadership Lab on June 5, 2003. Your child has the chance to participate in a study designed to examine the effect of service learning in developing leadership life skills. Service learning is simply a learning tool that adds a reflection component to the community service experience. Approximately 200 people have been selected to participate. Your child's participation may impact future leadership programming for many youth organizations.

The study will take place during District 11 4-H Leadership Lab on June 5, 2003. **If your child wants to participate, he or she should report to the registration area on June 5, following the completion of the service activity.** At this time students' will be assigned to two equally numbered groups. Group A will be given a questionnaire that will ask questions pertaining to his or her perception of his or her leadership skills. This Group will then be finished with their part of the study. Group B, upon completion of the service project will go through a reflective process with trained facilitators. During this reflective time, you child will be asked to reflect on the service and what impact they felt. They will be asked to share their thoughts with a group facilitator and write down their thoughts in a journaling activity. Group B will then be given the same questionnaire that the previous group had filled out. The entire process will be completed within two hours of the completion of the service project on June 5, 2003. All students participating in the study will be entered into a drawing for gift certificates from local merchants.

There are simple steps to follow if you want your child to participate in this study.

1. Read and sign the Informed Consent Form (green form) included in this packet.
2. Have your child read and sign the Student Assent Form (yellow form) included in this packet.
- 3. Send the two forms (green Informed Consent Form and yellow Student Assent Form) either via fax to (361) 265-9434 or send them in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. Please send the forms back by May 30, 2003.**
4. Keep the white copy of the forms for your own records.

**Your child must send the signed forms back to me by May 30, 2003 in order to participate in the study.**



The questionnaire will only be administered one time and will be strictly anonymous. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and your child can stop participation at any time without consequence. **Again, students participating in the study should report to the registration area on June 5, following the completion of the service activity.**

If you or your child have questions about the study please contact B. Darlene Locke, principal investigator, by telephone at (361) 265-9201 or e-mail at ([d-locke@tamu.edu](mailto:d-locke@tamu.edu)) or Dr. Barry L. Boyd, study supervisor, by telephone at (979) 862-3693 or e-mail at ([b-boyd@tamu.edu](mailto:b-boyd@tamu.edu)).

Thank you for your cooperation. You and your child's assistance are greatly appreciated. Please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

B. Darlene Locke  
Principal Investigator  
Department of Agricultural Education  
Texas A&M University

Dr. Barry L. Boyd  
Study Supervisor  
Department of Agricultural Education  
Texas A&M University

Enclosures: Informed Consent Form (green) Student Assent Form (yellow) to be faxed or sent back, Self-addressed stamped envelope, White copy of Informed Consent Form and Student Assent Form for your records (front/back copy), Reflection Questions

## APPENDIX G

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM - D11LL

#### Informed Consent Form

A Study on The Effect of Service in Developing Leadership Life Skills

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby consent to my child's participation in this research project. I understand that the Department of Agricultural Education at Texas A&M University supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following is provided for me to decide whether I wish for my child to participate in this present study.

1. I understand that the purpose of this study is to examine my child's self-perception of his or her leadership life skills upon completion of community service. I understand that my child will be asked to fill out a questionnaire one time only on June 5, 2003.
2. I understand that my child may be asked to reflect on his or her community service experience by being asked a series of questions by trained facilitators.
3. I understand that my child might be asked to participate in an organized reflection activity following the completion of an organized community service project as part of the District 11 4-H Leadership Lab. The reflection activity will take no longer than 2 hours.
4. I understand that the questionnaire will be anonymous. My child will not be asked to identify himself or herself on the questionnaire by name.
5. I understand that approximately 200 participants will be solicited to complete the questionnaire. Of that 200, only 60 will be asked to participate in the reflection activity.
6. I understand that the results of this study may help to develop future leadership and community service programs.
7. I understand that my decision to grant permission for my child to participate in this study is given voluntarily and that he or she may deny consent or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
8. I understand that my child's name will be entered in a drawing for prizes.
9. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to let my child participate in this study.
10. I have been given a copy of this consent form for my records.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If I would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, I am free to contact the investigator by e-mail or phone at: B. Darlene Locke, Department of Agricultural Education, Texas A&M University, [d-locke@tamu.edu](mailto:d-locke@tamu.edu), (361) 265-9201.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board Human - Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Support Services, Office of Vice President for Research at (979) 458-4067.

## APPENDIX H

### STUDENT ASSENT FORM - D11LL

#### Student Assent Form

A Study on The Effect of Service in Developing Leadership Life Skills

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that I have been chosen to participate in a dissertation study in conjunction with the 2003 District 11 4-H Leadership Lab. I am willing to take part in this study about service learning and leadership.

1. I understand that the purpose of this study is to examine my self-perception of my leadership life skills **upon completion of community service.**
2. I understand that I will be given a questionnaire about leadership and service. The questionnaire will ask questions pertaining to my self-perception of my leadership skills.
3. I understand that I may be asked a few reflective-type questions before answering the questionnaire. I have reviewed the questions included in the cover letter.
4. I understand that approximately 200 participants will be solicited to complete the questionnaire. Of that 200, only 60 will be asked to participate in the reflection activity.
5. I understand that the results of this study may help to develop future leadership and community service programs.
6. I understand that all of the information I give on the questionnaire will be strictly anonymous. I will not be asked to write my name on the survey so my privacy will be protected.
7. I understand that my name will be entered in a drawing for prizes.
8. I understand that I may refrain from answering any of the questions on the questionnaire or during the reflection process and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
9. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
10. I have been given a copy of this form for my records.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If I would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, I am free to contact the investigator by e-mail or phone at: B. Darlene Locke, Department of Agricultural Education, Texas A&M University, [d-locke@tamu.edu](mailto:d-locke@tamu.edu), (361) 265-9201.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board Human - Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Support Services, Office of Vice President for Research at (979) 458-4067.

## VITA

### BARBARA DARLENE HENDERSON LOCKE

10345 Agnes  
Corpus Christi, Texas 78406

### EDUCATION

Ed.D. Texas A&M University & Texas Tech University, Agricultural Education, August, 2004

M.Ag Texas A&M University, Horticulture, May, 1991

B.S. Texas A&M University, Agricultural Education, May 1985

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Nov. 2001 - present Extension Specialist - 4-H and Youth Development, Texas Cooperative Extension

July 1997 - Oct 2001 County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Aransas County, Texas Cooperative Extension

Feb 1995 - Jun 1997 County Extension Agent - Horticulture, Nueces County, Texas Cooperative Extension

Apr 1993 - Jan 1995 Research Technician II - Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Corpus Christi

Mar 1992 - Mar 1993 Resource Director, Waco Y.W.C.A.

Jun 1991 - Feb 1992 Counselor, Job Training Partnership Act, Central Texas Council of Governments

Jan 1991 - May 1991 Professional Internship, Bell County, Texas Cooperative Extension

Jan 1990 - Dec 1990 Graduate Teaching Assistant, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Texas A&M University

Mar 1986 - Dec 1989 County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Jackson County, Texas Cooperative Extension

Jun 1985 - Feb 1986 Extension Assistant - Range Science Department, Texas Cooperative Extension