



Our shared vision:

***“It may take a village to grow a child,
but it takes empowered children to
grow the village”***

CRAWFORD COUNTY YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Summary of Objectives and Purpose

Should leadership be a goal for the future? We believe that children are our future, and we also believe they can be leaders today. What steps can we take to instill in our children the desire to be leaders today, to help them make decisions in their lives to benefit them now and in the future?

This leadership program for sixth graders is the first of its kind in Crawford County. This program will increase opportunities for involvement for all sixth graders. According to Communities That Care (CTC) research, the more opportunities for positive involvement, the more young people are protected from risk factors for alcohol and drug use. The Crawford County CTC data shows us that 53% of sixth graders make decisions to act based on peer pressure, without thinking of what will happen, no doubt placing them at risk for unhealthy behaviors.

Most exciting about this program is that it will touch all Crawford County 6th grade students. Other leadership programs currently in place for other age groups are offered on an “application” basis. Most that apply to such a program have already exhibited some leadership capabilities. How exciting that we are able to bring this “mindset” to those who haven’t yet realized their capacity to lead.

Community volunteers will act as facilitators for the activities in this program. Students will benefit from relationships with adult volunteers and role models. Faculty will also benefit from the opportunity to interact with community members. It is hoped that such relationships will give teachers community resources and contacts to enhance curriculum.

This program is not intended to replace the character-development efforts of school personnel; rather, this program is a community resource intended to supplement teacher strategies.

Summary of Program Content

Leadership skills are developed in this Program through a series of fun activities. The facilitators introduce each Program component. An activity is conducted, followed by a discussion lead by the facilitators. Students gain an understanding of the objectives of each component through the experience of the activity and through the experiences of others shared during debriefing.

Program activities focus on the following skills and attributes: team building, diversity, communication and listening skills, conflict resolution and problem

solving, leading by example, and service/servant leadership. Although particular activities are listed within one of these areas, many of the activities touch upon more than one area of emphasis.

The Program will culminate in a 6th grade community service project. Participation is voluntary, but encouraged. The effort will be recognized with a t-shirt to each student that they will be asked to wear the last day of the Leadership Session to commemorate the completion of the program.

Program Administration / Logistics

A committee under the auspices of the Youth Leadership Crawford County Program administers the Program. Volunteers are sought from a wide spectrum of youth-related community organizations including but not limited to Parent teacher organizations, 4-H, Scouting, YMCA, medical and business community, etc. Volunteers will be screened through a collaborative effort with YOUTH FRIENDS. Program developers will train facilitators for the program and other qualified Leadership graduates.

The Program will be offered to all sixth-grade students in Crawford County.

Activities and discussions will be held during one class (approximately one hour). The Program will feature seven sessions beginning in September, and will continue through the months of October, November, January, February, and March. The April session will conclude the program with a celebration. Not less than two community volunteers will be assigned to each classroom. The facilitators encourage the participation from the teachers, student aides, and counselors, etc.

THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

The Role of the Facilitator

A facilitator, in the strictest sense, is a person who makes a process easier. A facilitator does not add or subtract from the substance of a process, but keeps the team focused and moving in a positive direction. An effective facilitator is like a catalyst in a chemical reaction. When certain chemicals are mixed together without a catalyst, the reaction is slow or nonexistent. When the catalyst is added, it accelerates a reaction and encourages the formation of a new compound.

The activities in this Program are fun and engaging. The facilitator has vital roles to play so that the Program is more than mere fun and games. Safety, observation, debriefing and assessment are a few of the important roles of facilitators.

None of the activities in this Program would be enjoyable or productive if the safety of the students was compromised. Safety issues are addressed in the instructions for specific activities, especially when they are not obvious. Facilitators should carefully review all instructions before attempting to facilitate any activity in this Program.

When observing an activity in progress, facilitators should resist the urge to step in and help when students are struggling. Students need to learn how to handle difficult situations without being rescued by an observer outside the team. Watch for what the team needs to improve, and make a special effort to track what they do well. Often students that work through these special problems and activities learn that their success comes from a lack of politics, rank, and “doing things the way we’ve always done them.”

Each session is designed to push students outside their normal comfort zone. Facilitators should encourage all students to actively participate in the activities and discussions. When activities call for students to form groups, cliques and close friends should be separated. If possible, groupings of students should be different for each activity throughout the program.

All of the facilitators’ roles are important, but the debriefing role is the one that provides students with the link between the activities they just completed and the purpose and objectives of the activity. Ask questions of the students so that the **students** reveal the wisdom of what they did and what they learned. Avoid lecturing or telling the students anything. Ask open-ended questions so that the students can develop their own solutions. Keep the discussion focused and provide an atmosphere of openness and trust. Sample discussion topics and questions are provided with each program component and activity.

It is important that each student participate in post-activity discussions. Question those students that are reluctant to volunteer. A fun way to encourage student

discussion is to use a “discussion ball,” Use a soft ball or similar object. Begin the discussion with the ball in your hand, Students are instructed that whoever has the ball must share their perspective with the class and then toss the ball to another student. Facilitating in this manner has at least two advantages. First, the discussion continues until every student has held the ball. Second, students are forced to listen to each other because they do not know whether or not they will be the next to be tossed the ball.

Here are ten suggestions for successfully debriefing Program activities:

1. Moment of Silence- five-second pause; most people are uncomfortable with silence. Someone will fill it. Wait and use eye contact during the silence.
2. Paraphrase Content- Rephrase the information back in the student’s own words.
3. Probing- simply request more information. “When did that happen?” “Please give me an example.” “How did that happen?” “Tell me more about...”
4. Bridging- take last 2-3 words of what was said and repeat in a flat monotone.
5. Reflection- reflect back in words what the student is feeling, and let the student correct you if you are wrong; be wrong at times.
6. Control Dominators and Encourage reluctant Participants- eye contact, redirecting, asking another person, discussion ball, etc.
7. Group Interplay- “How would the rest of you answer that question?”
8. Expanders- stems that require each student to complete the sentence: “By that you mean...” or “You did that because...”
9. Active Listening Phrases- - “What I hear you saying is...”
10. Reciprocating Questions- you are asked a question, respond with a question such as “What do you think?” Ask another student, “What is your reaction to that statement?”

Here are tips to help you be a good Program facilitator:

1. Show Enthusiasm- it is contagious!
2. Plan In Advance- know what to do and how to do it. Ask questions in advance. Try not to refer to notes or directions while facilitating. Practice!
3. Keep Your Head- be a leader, not a boss. Keep control.
4. Use Your Voice- but do not yell. Speak up so you are heard. If the students are noisy, wait until it is quiet before saying a word.
5. Overlook Mistakes- remember, these activities are being taught for fun and learning, not for perfection. Mistakes often result in learning.
6. Don’t Do It All Yourself- rely on the other adults in the room to assist you, and share the responsibility.
7. Evaluate- problems and mistakes will happen. Learn from them. Tell others about them. Offer constructive criticism of the Program.

Student Conduct

The classroom teacher's are an integral part of this Program. Teachers should be encouraged to participate in activities, assist in facilitation, and assess and evaluate the Program components. The classroom teachers are expected to be present throughout each activity and discussion.

Each teacher has rules governing classroom behavior. The activities in this Program are fun, and the usual rules may be stretched to their limits. Nonetheless, students should be reminded that these rules still apply. Unacceptable conduct during Program activities shall result in the consequences outlined in the teacher's classroom rules.

Each student will agree on a code of conduct prior to participating in Program activities. This code will emphasize active participation and respect for facilitators and other students. Students who disregard this agreement will be forced to observe the activity (or the next activity) without participating. If the conduct warrants further action, the teacher will be responsible for addressing the conduct in an appropriate manner. It is not the role of the facilitator to discipline students.

