

## **Celebrating Multi-Cultural Traditions in the Community-Extending After School 4-H Club Opportunities**

*By Debra Hren  
Volunteer Development/4-H  
Grand County*

We provided assistance to schools in developing after school 4-H clubs with an emphasis on serving minority youth. There has been past success in serving youth, but less success in serving *minority* youth.

The high school had an existing club called the Amigos Club, which serves primarily youth from Mexico, but is open to all high school students. The focus of the 4-H club is to help Latino students understand European American culture as well as sharing their own culture with the community. The club has held dances where they offered Salsa lessons. They also held festivities such as the Day of the Dead and Posadas at Christmas time. They put on a Cinco De Mayo festival for the whole community and traveled to Price and Salt Lake City to speak and perform at banquets. They also learned about the Moab community by participate in the half marathon and working on the mural on the Center Street Gym. The leaders of the group feel they are helping Latino youth build self esteem and reducing fear and prejudice in the community.

The middle school has a 4-H club that has worked on Navajo weaving. The members of the club are both Native American and European American and they are learning from each other.

Because of the diversity funding the intermediate school continued to hold an annual Posada where the Latino youth can showcase their culture. Wonderful food was served, dances were learned, and a Piñata was shared by all. As with the other programs, the focus was on developing an understanding of different cultures. These activities seemed to take away the fear of the unknown.

This program has been successful because all the partners were willing to work together. Club directors that were “driven” were vital. They had a passion and desire to empower cultural change. Administrators also needed to support these clubs in order for them to be successful. A program in an additional school was not successful because they did not have a leader with this passion.

To make clubs like these work, leaders need to have perseverance. Do not give up! Look for ways to close the cultural gap. It has been an exciting endeavor.