

Teens Lifting Teens

Introduction

The Confidence Project team recently welcomed The Teens Lifting Teens Program to present their work addressing teen resiliency, connection, and confidence. Led by Program Director Megan Hall, this initiative focuses on identified interventions aimed at supporting and boosting teenagers throughout Utah. Their presentation sparked meaningful dialogue about how confidence-building can take many forms across Extension programs.

What is the Teens Lifting Teens Program?



The Teens Lifting Teens (TLT) program is a statewide, grant funded project that began with the question, "What can reduce teen risk factors and increase protective factors?". According to the CDC, risk factors are characteristics or environmental circumstances that may increase the likelihood of experiencing adverse childhood experiences, and protective factors are those things that decrease that likelihood (CDC, 2024). The TLT team identified three key protective factors for youth; positive relationships, resiliency, and confidence and competence through teens teaching teens. To accomplish their mission, the TLT team partners with existing youth councils throughout the state to provide online trainings and resources, as well as funding opportunities to attend statewide training events. Currently, this program is working with 25 youth councils throughout Utah. These include youth councils through Utah State University's 4H program, city youth councils, and coalition youth councils.

How It Builds Confidence

Teens Lifting Teens works as an aid for existing youth councils to help them intentionally include the three key protective factors identified into the work they are already doing; positive relationships, resiliency, and confidence through mentorship. This program builds confidence for the adult mentors and youth leaders by providing resources they can use and access at any time. Online resources tackle topics like *Service Leadership*, *Adaptability*, *Communication*, *Problem Solving*, *Team Work* and many more.

Collaboration Opportunities: Looking Ahead

Teens Lifting Teens is always looking for opportunities reach new youth and underserved youth. They focus on quality rather than quantity, and each group they work with is valued. Each year TLT sponsors four state events that focus on different themes and offer unique experiences for youth. These focuses include confidence through hands-on workshops, strategies and skills for peer mentoring, leadership for empowerment and friendships, and finally a whole training geared around learning how to plan an effective community outreach event. For more information about these events or for details about receiving funding for these events, please visit their website program guide, [TLT Program Guide | USU](#).

Why It Matters

Across it's first three years of programming, TLT had an average of 29 youth councils each year which included an average of 750 youth enrolled in the program annually. Each year, youth participated in service learning with an average of 43 events each quarter that reached an average of 2,021 youth each quarter across all three years of programming. Additionally, each year, youth participated in near peer mentoring with an average of 57 events each quarter that reached an average of 1,752 youth each quarter across all three years of programming.

Youth were asked what changes they had seen in themselves over the past year and shared that TLT contributed to their overall wellbeing, in their development of leadership skills, helped them improve their personal confidence, and helped them make new friends. For example, one participant shared "I have become a much more independent and confident person throughout my years in teen council" while another youth shared "Back from the beginning of the year I've definitely seen an

improvement in communication, I definitely find myself talking to people and collaborating a lot more, as well as making new friends.”

Get Involved

The Teens Lifting Teens website contains a program guide explaining their mission, youth leadership and community engagement resources that include short 10 minute lessons that can be taught by youth or adult mentors to teach different principles. They also have created a Youth Council Guidebook that helps organize youth groups to help them run efficiently and effectively. For more information explore their website [Teens Lifting Teens | USU](#) or reach out to Megan Hall at megan.o.hall@usu.edu

Closing Reflection

Confidence isn't one-size-fits-all. Whether it's through youth mentorship, leadership, or creating connections, every program under The Confidence Project umbrella plays a role in helping Utahns thrive. We're proud to spotlight Teens Lifting Teens and the powerful work they're doing.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, May 16). *Risk and protective factors*. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). <https://www.cdc.gov/aces/risk-factors/index.htm>

Hall, M. (2026, September). *Teens Lifting Teens*. Confidence Project Monthly Meeting.

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