

USU Extension 4-H Program Takes the Lead with Google Partnership

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Google and the National 4-H Council are partnering on a new computer science and computational thinking initiative, with Utah State University Extension 4-H leading the way for the rest of the country.

USU Extension faculty members co-created the curriculum and resources for a computer science career pathway, which will roll out to the rest of the 4-H programs across the country. The new program will teach 4-H members technical skills like coding as well as teamwork, resilience and problem solving.

"It's so important for our youth to have experience with computer science because technology is now part of every industry," said Paul Hill, USU Extension associate professor. "Whether they have a career in agriculture, finance, healthcare or anything in between, a background in computer science will be particularly useful."

USU Extension faculty members led a training for the new program in July. Representatives from 4-H programs from 10 states travelled to Utah to learn and experience a variety of resources and activities to build the capacity for computer science in their state.

With Google's



support, the 4-H program will equip community educators with funding, curriculum, training, devices and the support of Google computer science experts.

"It is incredibly exciting to combine the power of 4-H with the impact of Google's philanthropy, products and people," said Jennifer Sirangelo, president and CEO of the National 4-H Council. "Working together, our two organizations will make a tremendous difference in the lives of young people by making computer science education accessible and engaging. No matter where kids live or what they aspire to be, these are skills that will help them succeed."

As with many 4-H programs, this program will feature teen-led, peer-to-peer teaching.

"The teens are really an integral part of the program," said Dave Francis, USU Extension associate professor. "As digital natives, they are comfortable with the technology and often learn much faster than the adults. This is a great opportunity for them to teach and inspire the younger 4-H members."

The program is funded by a \$1.5 million grant from Google. As a community organization, USU Extension relies on partnerships at both the national and local levels, as well as a wide network of volunteers, to create successful programs such as the new computer science program.

For more information about USU Extension 4-H programs,
visit utah4h.org.

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