Kansas 4-H Camp Mythbusting
Submitted by Jake Worcester

We thought we’d take a stab at busting some myths around Kansas 4-H Camp 2022. With so many layers and moving parts to our 4-H program, as well as the K-State Research and Extension system, there can be a lot of information flying around, and sometimes we hear only pieces. Here is a brief go at a few of the myths we’ve heard recently...with more to come in future communications!

Myth: Counselors can’t come to camp anymore

Reality: The traditional teen counselor is critical to the Kansas 4-H camp experience. In fact, we’re looking forward to more teen youth at 4-H camp than ever before. New, age-appropriate LEAD and Counselor-In-Training (CIT) programs will build on and enhance the traditional teen counselor model. Youth will be able to provide leadership to younger campers while also having their own community and camp experiences, all with the mentorship and supervision of 18-25 year old youth development staff.

Also, the new model provides a camp experience for all 4-H young people, ages 8-18. There won’t be “gap years,” and now older 4-H youth who don’t want to be a counselor but do want to have a camp experience will have options as well.

Myth: The cost of camp is going way up

Reality: Camp prices will increase. But, we know that families have different abilities to pay, and maintaining access to Kansas 4-H Camp is vital. Families will be presented with a tiered pricing model that allows for selecting the rates that their family can afford. At the subsidized camp rate with a 4-H discount, the all-inclusive cost will be just a few dollars more per day than the current rates charged by camp groups.

In addition, a statewide campership program will work in concert with continued local campership funding to provide access to those families who need additional assistance.

Myth: Local units won’t camp together anymore

Reality: Local units and entire camp groups may choose to continue to target specific dates to camp together. However, Rock Springs Ranch won’t hold dates with open slots. Camp works best when villages are full and all youth have access to camp. Any youth who can’t attend when their local unit is targeting is free to select from any other camp session. An open enrollment system allows for families to select sessions that not only work with their busy schedules, but provides the opportunity to select a 4-H camp session that is developmentally appropriate for their child(ren).

Myth: Extension agents and other professionals can’t come to camp anymore

Reality: Extension professionals can continue to have a role at camp and are welcome to attend. Rock Springs Ranch staff is excited to work with agents to schedule their attendance dates so they can come. Staying in Leadership Lodge or other retreat accommodations while at camp can also provide a nice upgrade to the traditional accommodations!
Myth: This is the last year for 4-H Camp

Reality: This couldn’t be further from the truth! Kansas 4-H Camp has evolved many times over the 75 years it’s been in existence, and this is simply the next evolution in building on that tradition. Kansas 4-H Camp is being expanded in the new model with hopes of having 4-H camp throughout even more of the summer. We look forward to welcoming thousands of new 4-H campers of all ages every summer!

Kansas 4-H Camp Future Teen Opportunities
Submitted by Jim Wheaton

1. 4-H Teen Camp: Rising High Schoolers, ages 14-17, will have their own teen camp opportunities in the summer of 2022. The new model provides a camp experience for all 4-H youth, ages 8-18. There won’t be “gap years,” and now older 4-H youth who don’t want to be a counselor but do want to have a camp experience will have options as well. Age appropriate enhancements will be made in our camp programming to keep teens engaged while mastering skills at an even deeper level in the areas of Leadership, Conservation, Sportsmanship with a focus on Shooting Sports, Equine, Aquatics, Paddle Sports and Crafts.

2. LEAD Camp: This is a teen leadership camp experience for 15 and 16-year old’s, rising 11th Graders. LEAD stands for Leadership, Engage, Act and Discover. LEADS will have the opportunity to enjoy many parts of the RSR experience. Time will be split between leadership, community development programming and an introduction to camp staff positions. Other program components will include a service project as well as some time to just relax and enjoy other camp activities.

3. C.I.T. Camp: This Camp will be an age appropriate enhancement to the 4-H traditional teen Counselor experience. Teens, 16 to 17-year old’s, especially rising 12th Graders, may still come to camp as part of our new Counselor in Training (CIT) Camp. The main change here is being that instead of being the 24/7 caregiver for a session of camp, they will just do it from breakfast to bedtime. These teens will now have their own camp experience where they’re still receiving camper care training and experience, but they will also have “camp” time with their peers built into each day keeping them fresh and even more effective as mentors and role models in the new model. “Camp” time breaks, away from campers, might include a session with their peers on our High Ropes Course for an enhanced team building experience, or a peer swim session at the pool to cool off. Additionally, instead of sleeping in the cabins with other children, they will get to room with their peers in their own cabins to enjoy some downtime and refresh for the next day with campers. These youth will be able to provide leadership to younger campers while also having their own community and camp experiences, all with the mentorship and supervision of 18 to 25-year-old youth development staff.

More information will be distributed to the system in the next few months. We will do our best to keep you up to date and help in understanding this new camping experience.