

EFFECTS OF 4-H INTERSTATE
EXCHANGE PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

THESIS

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By

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to all the Extension personnel, 4-H volunteers, and 4-H members who have participated or will take part in 4-H interstate exchange programs.

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ABSTRACT

EFFECTS OF 4-H INTERSTATE EXCHANGE PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

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This study examines the effects of participation in the 4-H interstate exchange program. Prior to this investigation, very little research has been done on this subject. The study included three case studies with a total of 27 4-H alumni from the three Texas counties of Gillespie, Comal/Guadalupe (joint program), and Travis, who took part in exchange between 1983 and 2001. The study first developed a profile of each case study's participants, examined the effects of those attributes, and investigated both hosting and traveling experiences. Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively and revealed that within each case study, the exchange experiences positively impacted not only the participants, but their families as well.

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Exchange programs allow students to view their state, country, and world in a whole new light. Previous research has shown that exchange and travel-abroad programs offer their participants “learn by doing” opportunities to experience varying environments, master a second language, explore careers, and become more broad-minded (Anonymous, 2001; Armstrong, 1984; Dannheim, Hansard, Lepley, Couch, & Boleman, 2001; Hansel, 1988; Hopkins, 1999; Nierenberg, 1994; Yamada, 2001; Young, 1990).

The 4-H program offers its members many opportunities to develop knowledge and skills such as responsibility and getting along with others (Burnett & Hebert, 2000). Seevers and Dormody (1994) specifically stressed that involvement in a variety of leadership activities promotes personal development and considerably compounds many life skills learned through other 4-H projects and programs. One leadership activity particularly significant to teen members is the 4-H exchange program.

Most of the research thus far has focused on international exchange or travel-abroad programs. Exchanges within our own country provide many of the same benefits, and are more cost-effective, and easier to conduct (Roper, 1993). As the program has continued to expand, there is a growing need to validate the time and efforts of Extension

personnel, youth, and adult leaders from throughout the country who dedicate countless hours in planning, implementing, and evaluating their exchange experiences.

Purpose

The overall purpose of this project was to examine the effects of the 4-H interstate exchange program experience as perceived by participants in the Texas counties of Gillespie, Comal/Guadalupe, and Travis over the last 20 years.

Problem Statement

Numerous 4-H members, leaders, parents, and Extension agents devote much time and effort to the 4-H interstate exchange program. There has been, however, only limited research on the effects of these 4-H interstate exchange experiences. Therefore, the problem to be addressed was: What were the self-perceived effects of participation in the 4-H interstate exchange program over the last 20 years

Objectives

1. Developed a profile of 4-H interstate exchange program participants including items such as age, gender, ethnicity, educational level, number of years in 4-H, 4-H projects and activities, duration of exchange program involvement, and places in which they traveled.
2. Investigated the individual and collective effects of the profile attributes on the participants' exchange experience.
3. Examined participants' perceptions of the hosting experience in comparison to their travel experience.
4. Examined the impact of the hosting experience to the host family (parents and siblings) from the participants' perspective.

Scope

This study investigated the perceptions of 4-H interstate exchange program participants in order to determine the effects of their experience. The sample included exchange program participants from the three Texas counties of Gillespie, Comal/Guadalupe, and Travis who were involved in the exchange program over the last 20 years. These three counties were selected because their exchange programs have been in existence for several years, and because each represents a different area—rural, suburban, and urban, respectively. Comal and Guadalupe Counties were combined because their 4-H interstate exchange program had been conducted jointly over a large portion of the time frame under examination.

Because there has been limited research conducted on the 4-H interstate exchange program, this investigation provided an in-depth understanding about the program and its effects on its participants and their families. While the study was predominantly qualitative in nature, quantitative methodology was also incorporated to provide additional support for the study's findings. A questionnaire and interviews were used for collecting data. The questionnaire was distributed to the entire sample, with follow up interviews being conducted with representatives from each of the three counties.

The study first developed a profile of the participants, which shed significant light on how the aspects of the profile impacted the participants' experiences. The researcher also closely examined the effects of the hosting and traveling experience to the participants and their families. The researcher, however, did not compare the benefits of 4-H interstate exchange programs with other interstate and international exchange programs.

Assumptions

1. Participants were actually the ones completing the questionnaire administered.
2. Participants provided true and honest responses.
3. The instrument measured what it was assumed to measure.

Definitions

District Leadership Lab – a 2- to 4-day leadership retreat where 4-H members age 14-18 receive in-depth training

4-H – youth educational component of Cooperative Extension that uses a “learn by doing” approach and a variety of subject matter projects to instill leadership and life skills in its members

Interstate exchange – county/parish group within one state or province partnered with a county/parish group from another state/province; each group was hosted by the other, and each group traveled to the other group’s state/province; for the 4-H interstate exchange program, this is typically a 2-year commitment in which one group hosts the first year and travels the second year and the other group travels the first year and hosts the second year; each hosting and travel experience lasts approximately one week; 4-H members from each group are typically matched based on gender, age, and interests

Hosting experience – youth and adult individuals of the county/parish group that travels typically stay in the homes of the hosting youth and their parents

Travel experience – youth and chaperones from one county/parish group goes to the other group’s county/parish to be hosted by them

International exchange – individuals or groups traveling for various purposes (study-abroad, language, etc.) to other countries; may include both travel and hosting experiences

National 4-H Congress – 4-H members age 14-18 learn about the citizen's political approach to community action for youth, and participate in programs that focus on citizenship, leadership, and communication

Recordbook – a prepared record of 4-H projects and activities that is judged for awards

State Spectra – 4-H members age 14-18 receive 20 hours of intensive instruction on one of nine program areas (careers) and other recreational activities are incorporated to bring all program areas together

Texas 4-H Congress – mock legislative educational event held in Austin in which 4-H members age 15-18 experience the legislative process first hand by role-playing senators, representatives, lobbyists, and press corps members

Texas 4-H Roundup – 4-H members age 14-18 compete in state level contests, recognition assemblies, and recreational activities

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Non-4-H International Exchange Program Experiences

Experiential Learning

While most students merely examine other regions of the country and world through their classroom studies, those who participate in exchange programs have the opportunity to experience life beyond their common academic surroundings. Hansel and Grove (1985) reported that exchange experiences were more intense, provided a greater incentive to learn, and allowed new knowledge and skills to be more easily remembered. Marcum and Roochnik (2001) urged that exchange programs offered a “distinctive learning opportunity that [students] can’t get at home or on-line” (p. B7).

Classroom activities often allow for hands-on learning, but little could beat the experiential educational value of both national and international travel experiences (Hopkins, 1999; Imhoff, 1995). In discussing the overseas exchange trip that she and her students took to Italy, Imhoff asserted that study abroad was “an extension of the hands-on teaching philosophy that we all advocate” (p. 32). According to Hansel and Grove (1985), the participants “learned by doing” as they attempted to communicate, grasped an understanding of the culture, and learned about the everyday operations of another area of the world.

Immersion in Host Culture

Another large attribute of exchange participation, as described by Hansel (1988), Hansel and Grove (1985), Seya (1995), Young (1990), and Yamada (2001), is the fact that students became totally immersed in the host culture, which had numerous benefits. Hansel compiled a summary of an eight-year impact study of an international exchange program, and identified four areas of learning that appear to be most closely related to cultural immersion: knowledge about other cultures, familiarity with the host country and its culture, appreciation of and ability in foreign language, and global awareness. Armstrong's (1984) study regarding students' perceptions of the benefits of their exchange experience with Mexico found that participants had a "heightened awareness of other value systems and an appreciation for cultural differences" (p. 3). Young, investigating a Texas-Mexico fellowship program, found that the participants increased their second language competency and maintained their interest in the host country.

Yamada (2001) reported that immersion in the language allowed the participants to develop language necessary to communicate on a daily basis. The day-to-day interaction with the culture afforded a foundation for language usage and helped to construct meaning. According to Seya's (1995) case study of 15 Japanese students studying abroad in Canada, the participants improved their English listening and speaking skills as a result of their immersion experience. Wiles (1996) reported that being familiar with other cultures was of critical importance in an increasingly diverse world.

Personal Benefits

There are still other benefits of exchange participation (mostly international exchange) that are presented within the literature. Armstrong (1984), Backner and

Zeutschel (1994), Hansel and Grove (1985), and TenHoeve and Handzel (1992) all reported that exchange participants had increased self-esteem, were more self-reliant, and developed a positive attitude toward themselves and others. Hansel and Grove asserted that exchange participants possessed greater independence and became “more adaptable, less likely to be influenced by peer pressure and more aware of the opportunities available to them” (p. 31).

According to Weiss (1998), the exchange experience provided participants a sense of confidence, and found that they had few difficulties managing their daily life activities. Those with previous study-abroad experience and/or having some knowledge of the culture before going were most prepared and had the fewest problems adjusting in the host country. Findings from these studies and others like Marcum and Roochnik (2001) and Sumka (1999) concluded that participants expanded their horizons, become more broad-minded and objective, and possessed improved problem solving skills.

Globalmindedness

While Marcum and Roochnik (2001) suggested that “international borders are no longer boundaries” (p. B9), TenHoeve and Handzel (1992) and Sumka (1999) asserted that travel abroad gave participants a sense of the world beyond our national borders and allowed them to be more global minded. An exchange trip to Italy provided marketing students a true sense of the global marketplace by allowing them to experience money exchanges and learn about issues related to international trade (Imhoff, 1995). Beyond awareness, exchange participation helped students to accept and appreciate differences across various cultures (Armstrong, 1984; Sumka).

These benefits have great implications in the long run for not only the participants, but also our nation and our world. They help build global relationships that foster a sense of international cooperation and partnerships (Bachner & Zeutschel, 1994 and Marcum & Roochnik, 2001). Bachner and Zeutschel summed it up by saying that study-abroad promoted “an overall attitude of internationalism” (p. 37). Marcum and Roochnik stressed how international study programs are “facilitating other, more comprehensive, institutional linkages” (p. B7) that would have significant global impacts within education, business, and many other aspects of society.

Academic and Career Choices

Exchange participation also influenced students’ academic and career choices (Armstrong, 1984; Bachner & Zeutschel, 1994; Biggs & Wan, 1991; and Sumka, 1999). As pointed out by Imhoff (1995), exchange trips offered students the chance to truly get a grasp as to how business is conducted in other countries. Also, Armstrong, Hansel (1988), and Sumka reported that as our world becomes more global, learning another language could certainly broaden a person’s career options. Wiles (1996) suggested, however, that “while learning other languages is important, understanding how different cultures conduct business gives job applicants the upper hand” (p. 1).

Hansel and Grove (1985) summarized these benefits by saying that exchange programs allowed participants to “acquire skills, attitudes, and knowledge useful throughout their lives” (p. 26). Armstrong (1984) also reported that there are many long lasting benefits of exchange participation, saying that it positively affects their attitude and self esteem and broadens their academic and career options. According to TenHoeve and Handzel (1992), the exchange experience impacted the students in many ways. They

report that exchange participants had increased self-esteem, a new, more global sense of the world, and returned home to share their experiences with many others.

Non-4-H Interstate Exchange Program Experiences

While international exchange programs have been much more widely represented in the literature, there were a few works related to non-4-H exchange programs within the United States. Two works that were found (Anonymous, 2001; Nierenberg, 1994) each described an exchange between rural and urban students within the same state (intrastate exchange), in which students spent some time in each others' "worlds." This direct, first hand experience allowed students to not only make new friends, but to also learn about life in an area that is quite different from where they live and have probably been raised. Neirenberg concluded that the students "could talk knowledgeably about a lifestyle very different from their own" (p. 155). While the students recognized their differences, they also found many commonalities.

Despite the fact that these students did not travel beyond an international border—or even a state border, it did not diminish the extent of cultural awareness and appreciation they experienced. These findings lend themselves to the idea that cultures—and life in general—can be very different from one part of a state to another, not just from one country to another.

4-H Program Participation

Benefits of 4-H Involvement

In order to build a foundation for a study of the 4-H interstate exchange program, the researcher sought to identify the benefits of 4-H and its leadership development opportunities. 4-H, one of the nation's largest youth development programs, is the youth

component of Cooperative Extension in counties and parishes across the United States and numerous other countries. Using a “learn by doing” approach and a variety of subject matter projects, the program instills leadership and life skills in its members. 4-H began nationally in 1902 and in Texas in 1908. The 4-H emblem, one of only four protected by our federal government, is the four-leaf clover with an “H” on each leaf representing head, heart, hands, and health. (2002-2003 Texas 4-H Clover)

Several studies, feeding from different perspectives, have documented the numerous benefits of 4-H participation. Burnett and Hebert (2000) surveyed nearly 100 Louisiana 4-H agents and found that “92% of the 4-H activities were rated by the agents as having moderate or higher educational value” (p. 57). While these findings were significant, the researchers suggested that further research should focus specifically on the perceptions of participants and parents regarding the educational value of program participation.

Two studies, in particular, surveyed 4-H members in investigating the impacts 4-H has had on their lives. Rockwell, Stohler, and Rudman (1981) reported that participation in 4-H allowed youth the opportunity to meet other people, gain self-confidence, and become involved in community activities. Four-H activities helped prepare members for working with other people and speaking before groups. In examining life skills development through 4-H, Boyd, Herring, and Briers (1992) found that “the development of life skills allows youth to cope with their environment by making responsible decisions, having a better understanding of their values, and being better able to communicate and get along with others” (p. 1).

In analyzing surveys from 2,500 Montana students, Astroth and Haynes (2002) found that students involved in 4-H for at least one year helped others in the community, had a higher level of leadership involvement, and were looked up to as role models. They also volunteered, had positive self-identity, were more self-assured, and had better relationships with adults. In addition, they concluded that 4-H members were “more likely to develop the practical and useful skills that will help them develop into capable, competent, and contributing adults” (p. 8).

A common question that arises from research such as this is whether the youth who get involved in 4-H would excel anyway. Astroth and Haynes (2002) dispel this question by highlighting previous research such as the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS:88), and by pointing out the diversity of and within programs. They also asserted that Montana 4-H members gave credit to their participation for making a positive impact in their lives. The researchers concluded by saying that “4-H is a powerful, proven program that makes a positive difference for all those who participate” (p. 11).

Leadership Skills

In addition to the benefits of 4-H participation that were just mentioned, the 4-H program provided numerous opportunities for its members to build their leadership skills. In comparing survey responses from 4-H teens and non-4-H teens, Boyd et al. (1992) found that participation in 4-H was positively related to perceived leadership life skill development. 4-H members scored themselves higher in all areas of leadership life skill development. And as 4-H members increased their participation in 4-H, so did their level of leadership life skill development (Boyd et al. and SeEVERS & Dormody, 1994). Richey

(2002) reported that 4-H youth were afforded more opportunities to develop and practice leadership life skills than other public school students.

Kleon and Rinehart (1998) examined the perceptions of teen leadership college-type program participants—specifically their perceptions of their leadership skills before and after the program—and concluded that the program had a positive impact. Compared to their own assessment of their leadership skills prior to the program, participants' perceptions at the conclusion were significantly higher.

In their tri-state study of 4-H teens, Seevers and Dormody (1994) concluded, Participation in many different leadership activities at a variety of levels promotes personal development as well as the opportunity to work with other youth and adults, set goals and priorities, accept responsibility, and have a greater role in the planning, implementing, and evaluating of leadership development activities (p. 53).

All this indicated the significance of 4-H offering its members opportunities to participate in “trial leadership roles” (Seevers & Dormody, p. 49; Richey, 2002, p. 17). Richey summarized the effects of 4-H leadership efforts by saying that the diversity of activities and experiences helped in developing capable, contributing citizens and leaders for tomorrow's society.

4-H International Exchange Program Experiences

Findings related specifically to 4-H international exchange programs and experiences were quite similar to other exchange endeavors. According to Boyd, Giebler, Hince, Lui, Mahta, Rash, Rowald, Saldana, and Yanta (2001), 4-H international exchanges provided first hand cultural involvement in which participants broadened their

global and cultural awareness, improved language skills, and developed meaningful relationships with host families. As stated previously, exchange programs positively impacted participants by helping to increase self-esteem, influence career and life decisions, and improve problem solving skills.

In doing her Master's thesis, Williams (2000) conducted a descriptive census survey study of 21 4-H International Youth Exchange (IFYE) Program participants, and discovered that they experienced a significant increase in their knowledge of the host country. Through their six-month exchange experience, the participants also developed a greater appreciation for their home country, improved their communication skills, and were more aware of world issues. She did, however, note that their perceptions and attitudes about the different culture were positive even before their exchange experience.

Stitsworth (1987) conducted an experimental study consisting of 154 exchange participants and 112 non-participants (control). His findings showed that the exchange participants became more flexible and independent as compared to the non-participants. He also found that the exchange experience positively and significantly changed the attitudes of participants toward other cultures.

Sumka (1999) and Etling, Reaman, and Sawi (1993) also explored barriers to participation including expense, management, and lack of support and/or knowledge. With these and other barriers impacting the potential for international travel, Etling et al. suggested the need for other alternatives.

Etling, Kalangi, and Waites (1990) presented a less expensive alternative to travel abroad: an exchange between 4-H members in Arizona and young people in Mexico. Those from Mexico performed folk dances in Arizona schools and Arizona 4-H members

helped form 4-C (equivalent to 4-H) clubs in Mexico. This program, part of the National Association of the Partners of the Americas Inc., provided travel grants and collaborative international efforts including training opportunities and resources for various project work for 4-C and 4-H members and leaders. Just as with other international exchanges, this cross-cultural endeavor enhanced cultural awareness, improved second language abilities, and changed stereotypes.

4-H Interstate Exchange Program Experiences

Now the focus turns to 4-H interstate exchange programs and experiences, in which very little research has been done. A typical 4-H interstate exchange involves two county/parish 4-H groups in different states who make a two-year commitment to host one year and travel (be hosted) the other year. Participants, their parents, and group leaders work cooperatively to plan, implement, fund, and evaluate the program.

Roper (1993) presented a unique interstate exchange that had an international twist. An exchange between Virginia 4-H member and students in Puerto Rico allowed the participants to explore American and Hispanic cultures, be exposed to another language, and enjoy group activities with host families. He asserted that the effort was a means of retaining 4-H members and attracting teens to the 4-H program. This type of exchange was also “much more affordable and easier to conduct than an international exchange” (p. 1).

Dannheim et al. (2001) summarized results from a survey of former 4-H interstate exchange participants from Fisher County, Texas, where the exchange program had been running for twenty years. She explored the effects of the exchange program on its participants, and concluded that the program had positive impacts on participants and

helped to open their minds to other cultures and settings. Seventy-four of 77 respondents rated their exchange program experience as a 4 or 5 on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest score.

As far as some of the specific benefits, Dannheim et al. (2001) found that the exchange program helped participants adapt to new surroundings, deal with different types of people, broaden their view of the world, accept and appreciate diversity, and adapt to various customs and different ways of life. It also allowed them to get to know their fellow county 4-H members better, appreciate where they come from, and become more well-rounded. Aside from the actual travel and hosting activities, the experience fostered hard work, lots of planning, and dedication in order to make the program a success.

Dannheim et al. (2001) also reported that 4-H interstate exchange efforts may be the only chance for some young people to experience life beyond their own backyard. She did, however, suggest the need for further research in order to determine how attitudes and perceptions of differing cultures and geographic regions has changed due to 4-H exchange programs.

Previous Research Findings from Qualitative Approaches

While there has been significant research and discussion on international travel programs, little exist on the impacts of exchange experiences within the states. When there is little known on a subject, it is often helpful to use qualitative approaches to explore the topic rather than test hypotheses. Several other studies have used a mix of both qualitative and quantitative methods, and some have utilized case studies to investigate more deeply.

Weiss (1998) used both qualitative and quantitative methods in her investigation of overseas adjustment of American college and university students. She used surveys, observations, and interviews to gauge how particular factors influenced overseas adjustment among 43 undergraduate American students at Boston University who traveled to Australia.

Young (1990) used questionnaires and interviews to investigate the perceptions of Texan and Mexican fellows regarding their study abroad experience. While the questionnaire was distributed to 33 Texans and 16 Mexicans, interviews were conducted with 6 of the Texan and 4 of the Mexican respondents to gain further insight into the experience. The participants ranged in age from 23 to 81, so the youngest and oldest were selected for interviews to shed light on different perceptions across varying generations.

Another example of using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is the work done by Anderson (1988). In his case study on the only known U.S. exchange program at the 2-year level, he used 2 instruments to investigate college students' study abroad experience. His quantitative approach included the worldmindedness scale, and a questionnaire was used to gauge demographic and attitudinal details. His results were analyzed statistically and collected into descriptive narratives.

A case study, conducted by Yamada (2001), focused on 4 white American women who participated in an immersion experience in Japan. Besides questionnaires and interviews, the research also used participant observations. Another case study, lead by Seya (1995), involved 15 Japanese college students who had participated in a 3-week

study abroad program in Canada. Instruments used included pre- and post-tests, participant observations by the investigators, student and instructor questionnaires, and journaling.

In studying successful and unsuccessful recruitment and retention practices of National Student Exchange (NSE) at California State University, Rezvani-Lopez (1999) used a descriptive case study. She initially sent a questionnaire to 15 NSE advisors and followed that up with interviews with some of the advisors.

These are several examples of research efforts that have included case studies and a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology. Yamada (2001) urged that findings from his study, limited to specific participants, may not be true of other cases. Like Yamada, other researchers have stressed the need for further investigation on exchange programs and their impact on a person's entire life.

Therefore, the present study will use both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the effects of participation in the 4-H interstate exchange program. This study will develop a profile of the participants, determine the effects of personal attributes on experiences, examine more specifically the hosting and traveling experiences, and determine what impact the hosting experience had on the families of the participants.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Sample

This study used a purposive sample consisting of 4-H interstate exchange program participants from Gillespie, Comal/Guadalupe (joint program), and Travis Counties in Texas. The anticipated sample size would include 10 participants from each of the three county areas who had graduated between 1985 and 2001. The researcher selected this range in order to capture a wide range of experiences while focusing on past exchange participation rather than that of those currently involved with the program. These three counties were selected because their exchange programs have been in existence for several years, and because each represents a different area—rural, suburban, and urban, respectively. To identify the sample, the researcher contacted Extension agents and volunteers in these counties in order to secure contact information on their 4-H interstate exchange program participants.

A total of 63 (36 female and 27 male) names were garnered (Gillespie-22, Comal/Guadalupe-20, and Travis-21) from these various sources. Of this group, the researcher sent letters and consent forms to a total of 49 4-H alumni in the three county areas (Gillespie-19, Comal/Guadalupe-17, and Travis-13). Of this population, a total of 30 completed consent forms were returned (Gillespie-9, Comal/Guadalupe-11, and

Travis-10). Also, two letters, both in the Gillespie County group, were returned undeliverable. Reminder postcards were also mailed to the population.

The final sample included a total of 27 4-H interstate exchange participants (Gillespie-7, Comal/Guadalupe-10, and Travis-10). These respondents graduated between 1983 and 2001, and had participated in the exchange program in the last 20 years, providing a broad mix of experiences and maturity levels. Taking into account the number of those returning their completed questionnaires as compared to those who only returned their completed consent forms, the response rate was 78% for Gillespie County, 91% for Comal/Guadalupe, and 100% for Travis County. Follow up interviews were then conducted with a total of 12 (Gillespie-3, Comal/Guadalupe-5, and Travis-4) of those who returned their completed questionnaire.

Design

This study included three separate descriptive case studies using both qualitative and quantitative research design methodology. The boundaries for each case study were the respective county 4-H programs in which the participants were involved in the 4-H interstate exchange program. Because little research had been done on the 4-H interstate exchange program, the researcher conducted an in-depth investigation of the program and its effects on its participants and their families. As Merriam (1988) pointed out, the qualitative approach allows the researcher to explore feelings and perceptions rather than cold hard facts, and provides “insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing” (p. 10). Furthermore, Leedy and Ormrod (1985) reported that the purpose of a case study is to aid researchers in learning “more about an unknown or poorly understood situation” (p. 114).

While the study was predominantly qualitative in nature, quantitative methodology was also incorporated to provide additional support for the study's findings. Within the questionnaire instrument, participants were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 their perceptions about their experiences, its impact on their family, and similarities with their exchange partner. These ratings could then be analyzed statistically and compared with narratives from the respondents.

The qualitative aspects of the research provided personal accounts that were reported in narrative format, using individual quotes taken directly from the accounts. From the quantitative results, the researcher was able to perform statistical analyses, which are reported in numeric, scientific format. This combined effort provided both explanation and validation of the 4-H interstate exchange program, which continues to deserve and require further study.

Instrumentation

The researcher developed and utilized a questionnaire that would satisfy both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the study. While many limit case studies to interviews and observations, Merriam (1988) suggested that "a case study can also include data gathered by a survey instrument" (p. 8). The questionnaire, which can be found in Appendix C, first asked the participants about their background including the year in which they graduated high school, gender, ethnicity, level of education, and occupation. Then the researcher wanted to know more about their 4-H involvement such as their projects, activities, and offices served. Once that background was provided, the respondents then answered specific questions about their 4-H interstate exchange experiences. All the questions in which the participants were asked to rate their exchange

experiences used a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest. With every rating, the respondents were asked to explain their selections. Other questions were simply open-ended questions related to various aspects of their exchange experiences. The final questions dealt with their recommendations and future involvement with the 4-H interstate exchange program. This combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches helped to solidify the information garnered from the study.

As a follow up to the completed questionnaire, interviews were conducted with a total of 12 (Gillespie-3, Comal/Guadalupe-5, and Travis-4) of the participants to further explore and validate their responses. In addition to reviewing the highlights of their exchange experiences, the respondents were also asked additional questions related more specifically to various aspects of hosting, traveling, and future recommendations.

In discussing means of determining the validity of measurement instruments, Leedy and Ormrod (2001) suggested using a panel of experts to “scrutinize an instrument to ascertain its validity for measuring the characteristic in question” (p. 99). The questionnaire was evaluated by a panel of experts including Extension personnel who are familiar with 4-H programs and opportunities including 4-H interstate exchange. The instrument was also thoroughly reviewed by members of the researcher’s thesis committee. Necessary adjustments were made prior to presentation to the study group.

The researcher completed the Human Subjects Training module and the necessary application materials for review and approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Texas State University (formerly Southwest Texas State University). A copy of the IRB certification can be found in APPENDIX A.

Data Collection

A questionnaire and follow up interviews were used to collect the data. Once the researcher had an adequate pool of 4-H interstate exchange participants from each of the three counties, she distributed by mail a letter and informed consent document to the potential participants in the spring of 2003. The letter initially stressed the fact that they were selected to provide information about their 4-H interstate exchange program experiences. The letter provided the participants information about the research and the impending questionnaire and follow up interviews. Also stressed was the importance of their input regarding their 4-H interstate exchange experiences—especially since very little research has been conducted on this topic. They were also informed that the researcher would provide them with a written summary of the study's results once the analysis was complete. Self-addressed, stamped envelopes were provided to help ensure a higher response rate. Participants were also allowed to fax their forms. A sample of this letter and the consent form can be found in APPENDIX B.

Once the participants signed and returned the informed consent document, the researcher distributed by mail a letter and the questionnaire to them. The letter reiterated the purpose of the study and provided directions for completing and returning the questionnaire. A copy of the respective participant's completed informed consent form was also included with this letter, and the participants were reminded about the voluntary nature of the study and that its records would be kept confidential. Again, self-addressed, stamped envelopes were provided with the letter to help ensure the return of the questionnaire, and participants were offered the opportunity to return their questionnaires via fax. A sample of this letter and the questionnaire can be found in APPENDIX C for

further review. (The questionnaire was reformatted to fit the margin requirements of this document.)

The study also included follow up interviews with 12 (Gillespie-3, Comal/Guadalupe-5, and Travis-4) of the respondents in order to further explore and support the data provided in the questionnaire responses. Three interviews were done face-to-face, while the rest were conducted over the phone, using a speakerphone. All interviews were completed in the fall of 2003 and audiotaped to enable the researcher to report the information shared as accurately as possible. Participants were informed that the interviews were being tape-recorded. APPENDIX D provides the interview questions and a summary of responses. Those selected for interviews were representative of the early, middle, and late segments of the 20-year period. In a case study involving experiences abroad, Young (1990) used a questionnaire, and then interviewed the youngest and oldest respondents. These interviews supported the findings of the questionnaire and provided valuable insights. Using more than just one method or instrument “enhances the validity and reliability of one’s study” (Merriam, 1988, p. 2).

Data Analysis

Narrative data was compiled to satisfy the qualitative aspects of the study. When presenting quotes and/or narrative information from respondents, all names were changed to maintain confidentiality. The Microsoft Excel program was used for data analysis, and to determine results from the quantitative portion of the study. This program sufficiently manipulated the data, and performed the statistical functions required. Because the sample is neither random nor representative of the entire population of 4-H interstate exchange program participants, results from this study cannot be generalized. Leedy and

Ormrod (2001) summed it up by saying that results from qualitative research methods such as case studies are “useful for generating or providing preliminary support for hypothesis” (p. 150).

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of the 4-H interstate exchange program experience as perceived by participants in the Texas counties of Gillespie, Comal/Guadalupe, and Travis over the last 20 years. The first portion of this chapter will provide a profile of the counties, their 4-H programs, and the participants in this study. Following this background is a summary of the results found within each of the three case studies. Quantitative data was organized and analyzed with the help of the Microsoft Excel program. Qualitative data was compiled and excerpts from both the questionnaire and follow up interviews are presented in this chapter.

Profile of Counties and Their 4-H Club Programs

Gillespie County, located in the Texas Hill Country, represented the rural case study. As reported in Table 1, the county population is 20,814 (Texas Almanac) with Fredricksburg serving as the county seat. Other towns include Doss, Harper, Luckenbach, and Stonewall. The racial/ethnic makeup consists of 83% Anglo, 16%, and 1% Black and Other (these labels taken directly from the Texas Almanac). Among the three school districts in the county, Doss CSD, Fredricksburg ISD, and Harper ISD, there were 3,228 students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve during the 2000-2001 school year (Texas School Directory). The staff of Texas Cooperative Extension in Gillespie County consists of three full-time Extension Agents and one support staff

member. Their county 4-H club program had 497 youth enrolled, with the racial/ethnic breakdown being 95% White, 4% Hispanic, and <1% each of American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian/Pacific Islander (Texas Cooperative Extension, Gillespie County). (These ethnicity labels are those used within the 4-H enrollment program.)

Located just north and east of the major Texas city of San Antonio, Comal and Guadalupe Counties represented the suburban case study. Since they share a county line, there has typically been a joint 4-H exchange program between them. Comal and Guadalupe Counties, combined population 167,044, include the county seats of New Braunfels and Seguin, respectively, as well as the other towns of Bulverde, Canyon Lake, Fair Oaks Ranch, Cibolo, and Marion (Texas Almanac). As shown in Table 1, between the two counties, there are 68% Anglo, 3% Black, 28% Hispanic, and 1% Other. According to the Texas School Directory, the six school districts within the two-county

Table 1: Profile of Counties and Their 4-H Club Programs

| | <i>Gillespie (rural)</i> | <i>Comal/Guadalupe (suburban)</i> | <i>Travis (urban)</i> |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2000 Population: | 20,814 | 167,044 | 812,280 |
| % Anglo | 83 | 68 | 57 |
| % Black | 0.5 | 3 | 10 |
| % Hispanic | 16 | 28 | 28 |
| % Other | 0.5 | 1 | 5 |
| 2000-01 PK-12 School Enrollment | 3,228 | 33,092 | 109,269 |
| 2003 4-H Club Enrollment: | 497 members: | 762 members: | 3,016 members: |
| % White, not of Hispanic origin | 95 | 95 | 63 |
| % Black, not of Hispanic origin | 0 | <1 | 6 |
| % Hispanic | 4 | 3 | 28 |
| % American Indian/Alaska Nat. | <1 | <1 | 1 |
| % Asian/Pacific Islander | <1 | <1 | 2 |
| % Female | 52 | 59 | 47 |

(ethnicity labels taken directly from respective reference)

area, Comal ISD, New Braunfels ISD, Marion ISD, Navarro ISD, Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD, and Seguin ISD, had a total enrollment of 33,092 students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grades. Texas Cooperative Extension, with county support, employs nine full time Extension Agents and Program Assistants and two support staff members in the 2 counties. The combined 4-H club enrollment in Comal and Guadalupe Counties is 762 members. Of this number, 95% are White, 3% Hispanic, <1% each of Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander, and 59% female (Texas Cooperative Extension, Comal and Guadalupe Counties).

Travis County, situated in the heart of central Texas, represented the third and final set of case studies, which included those in the urban setting. The population of the county is 812,280, including 57% Anglo, 10% Black, 28% Hispanic, and 5% Other (Texas Almanac). The county seat is Austin, a major urban hub for Texas and home of the state capitol. Other towns include Del Valle, Lakeway, Manor, and Pflugerville. There were 109,269 pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade students in the five school districts of Austin ISD, Pflugerville ISD, Manor ISD, Eanes ISD, and Del Valle ISD (Texas School Directory). Within Travis County's Texas Cooperative Extension office, there are 24 full time Extension Agents, Program Assistants and Instructional Specialist, as well as six support staff members. There were 3,016 youth enrolled in the Travis County 4-H club program, and among those were 63% White, 6% Black, 28% Hispanic, 1% American Indian/Alaska Native, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 47% female (Texas Cooperative Extension, Travis County).

According to information provided by Extension personnel and 4-H volunteers, each of these counties has been involved in 4-H interstate exchange programs for at least

the last 15 years. These three Texas counties have exchanged with other 4-H groups from throughout the United States. The list of other states is quite extensive, including California, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington. Considering each exchange group has 10-15 4-H members, there have been more than 100 4-H members who have participated in hosting and/or travel experiences over that time period. Gillespie and Comal/Guadalupe Counties have continued their exchange program and have since exchanged with 4-H groups from Kansas and New York.

Profile of Case Study Participants

Tables 2, 3, and 4 summarize important demographic information regarding the participants in the study. Completed questionnaires were assigned a letter (A, B, C, etc.) within each of the three groups in the order which they were received by the researcher. These codes were randomly assigned to each participant and do not represent them or their responses. In order to maintain the human component to responses without sacrificing confidentiality, the names of all respondents were changed. These

Table 2: Profile of Participants from Gillespie County (rural)

| Code/Name* | Graduation Year | Gender | Ethnicity | Education Level | Occupation |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| A – John | 1994 | Male | White | Graduate | Loan Officer/Rancher |
| B – Bob | 1992 | Male | White | Graduate | Marketing Specialist |
| *C – Jane | 1992 | Female | White | Graduate | County Extension Agent |
| *D – Debra | 1988 | Female | White | Graduate | Manager |
| E – Julie | 1989 | Female | White | Graduate | Buyer |
| *F – Tim | 1997 | Male | White | Bachelor | Engineer |
| G – Sam | 1996 | Male | White | Graduate | Loan Officer |

* indicates those who participated in follow up interviews

pseudonyms were also used when presenting quotes and/or narrative information from the respondents.

As outlined in Table 2, the case study group from Gillespie County (rural) consisted of seven people whose graduation years ranged from 1988 to 1997. Three of them were female and the rest (four) were male. They were all of White ethnicity. With the exception of one who had completed or was pursuing a Bachelor's Degree, all of the participants had completed or were pursuing a Graduate degree. Their occupations ranged from Loan Officer to Engineer.

There were 10 participants from the combined county area of Comal and Guadalupe Counties (suburban). Information on each participant is provided in Table 3. Their graduation years ranged from 1987 to 2001. As far as their gender breakdown, there were seven female and three males. All the participants are of the White ethnicity.

Table 3: Profile of Participants from Comal/Guadalupe Counties (suburban)

| Code/Name* | Graduation Year | Gender | Ethnicity | Education Level | Occupation |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A – Jim | 2001 | Male | White | Bachelor | Student |
| *B – Sally | 1999 | Female | White | Graduate | Student |
| *C – Rick | 1997 | Male | White | Professional | Student |
| D – Mary | 1991 | Female | White | Graduate | Mom |
| E – Vicki | 1989 | Female | White | Bachelor | Teacher |
| *F – Lori | 2000 | Female | White | Bachelor | Promotional Programs Director |
| *G –Michelle | 1990 | Female | White | Graduate | County Extension Agent |
| H – Fred | 1999 | Male | White | Bachelor | Student |
| I – Sarah | 1987 | Female | White | Graduate | Registered Dietitian |
| *J – Karen | 1993 | Female | White | Bachelor | Sales Representative |

* indicates those who participated in follow up interviews

Five of them had completed or were pursuing their Bachelor Degree, four had done the same at the Graduate level, and one had completed or was attending Professional School. While nearly half of them were currently still in school, the occupations among the others included Sales Representative, Teacher, and County Extension Agent.

There were also 10 4-H alumni from Travis County (urban) who participated in this study. Their graduation years ranged from 1991 to 2001. Among this group, there were six female and four male, and one was of Hispanic ethnicity and nine were of White ethnicity. As far as their highest level of education, two reported that they were high school graduates and one had completed or was pursuing an Associate Degree. Four had done the same with a Bachelor Degree, two had completed or were pursuing their Graduate Degree, and one had completed or was attending Professional School. Occupations included Teacher, Child Care Worker, and Real Estate Analyst. This information is also summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Profile of Participants from Travis County (urban)

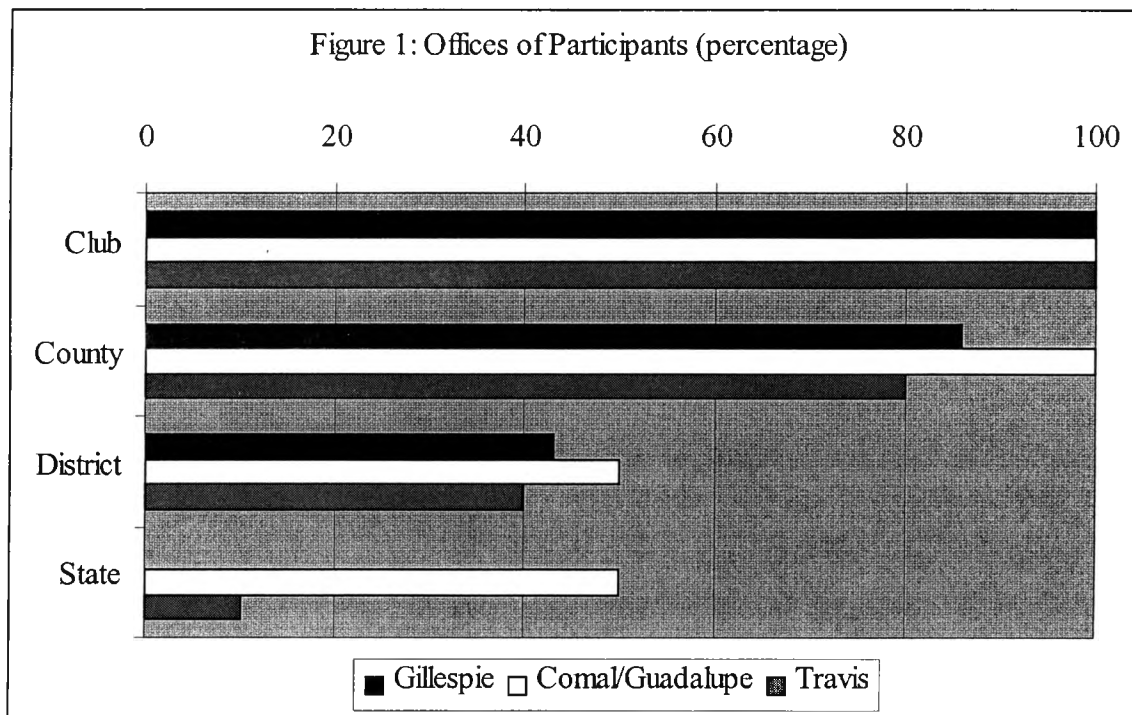
| Code/Name* | Graduation Year | Gender | Ethnicity | Education Level | Occupation |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| *A – Carol | 1999 | Female | White | High School | Child Care Worker |
| *B – Ben | 1996 | Male | White | Graduate | Commodity Trader |
| C – David | 1996 | Male | White | Professional | Lawyer |
| D – Ron | 1993 | Male | White | High School | (no answer) |
| E – Kim | 1991 | Female | White | Bachelor | Teacher |
| F – Kate | 1996 | Female | White | Bachelor | Public Relations |
| *G – Cori | 1994 | Female | White | Graduate | Real Estate Analyst |
| H – Cindy | 1991 | Female | White | Associate | Administrative Technician |
| *I – Anne | 2001 | Female | White | Bachelor | Student |
| J – Clyde | 1999 | Male | Hispanic | Bachelor | Development Director |

* indicates those who participated in follow up interviews

4-H Program Involvement

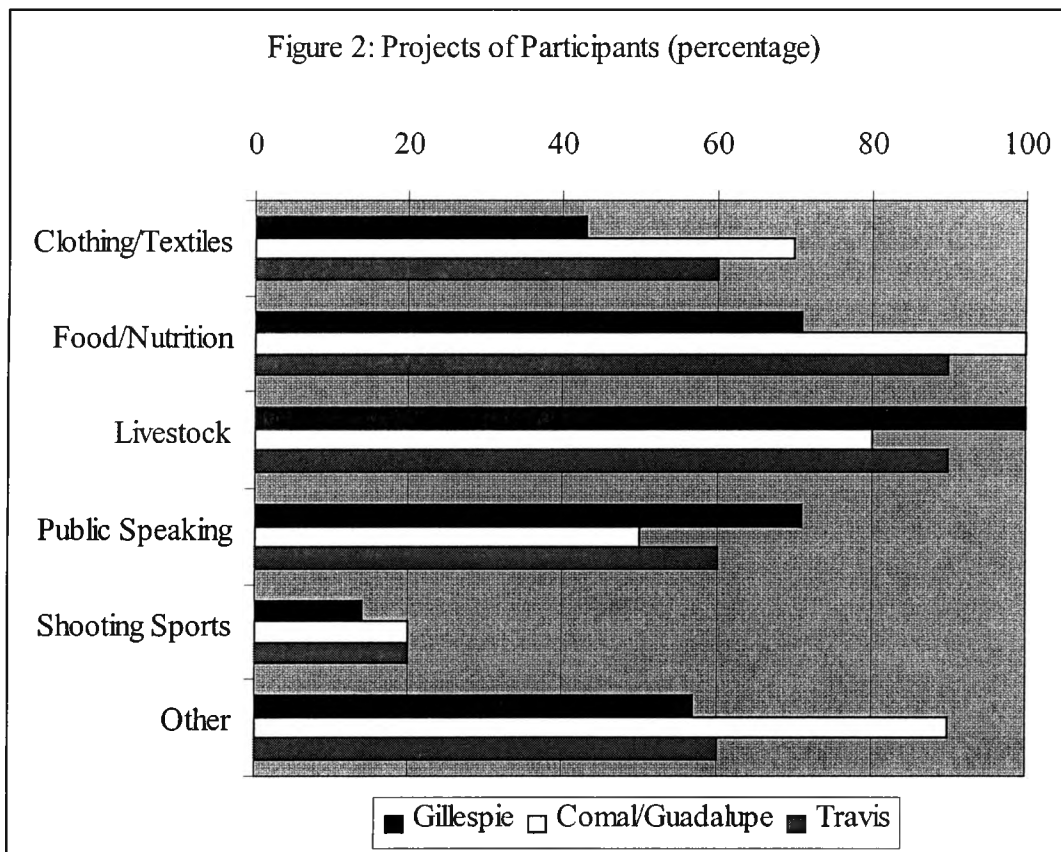
Among the three case study groups, similar results were found regarding the participants' involvement in 4-H projects, activities, and offices. While the following text provides a summary of this information for each county group, a complete outline can be found in Figures 1, 2, and 3.

In looking at the number of years the rural (Gillespie County) participants had been involved in the 4-H program, the average was 12 years, with the lowest and highest reports being 10 and 14 years, respectively. All of these participants had served as an



officer at their club level. One fewer had served at the county level, while three had been involved at the district level. None reported having served on the state level.

Their project participation was quite diverse, as seen on Figure 2. All of the participants had been involved in livestock projects including cattle, swine, sheep, and poultry. Five of them also reported their involvement in food and nutrition, as well as other projects, which included entomology, judging meats and livestock, and service.



Three of the participants noted their involvement in the clothing and textiles project while only one reported participating in the shooting sports project.

These rural participants were also involved in a variety of 4-H activities. Six of the respondents had done a recordbook and/or were involved in Texas 4-H Congress, and

Texas 4-H Roundup. Among this group, three of the members had taken part in District Leadership Lab and other activities including exchange, Ambassadors, state 4-H camp, and district beef committee. None of the participants reported being involved in State Spectra or National 4-H Congress. This information can also be found in Figure 3.

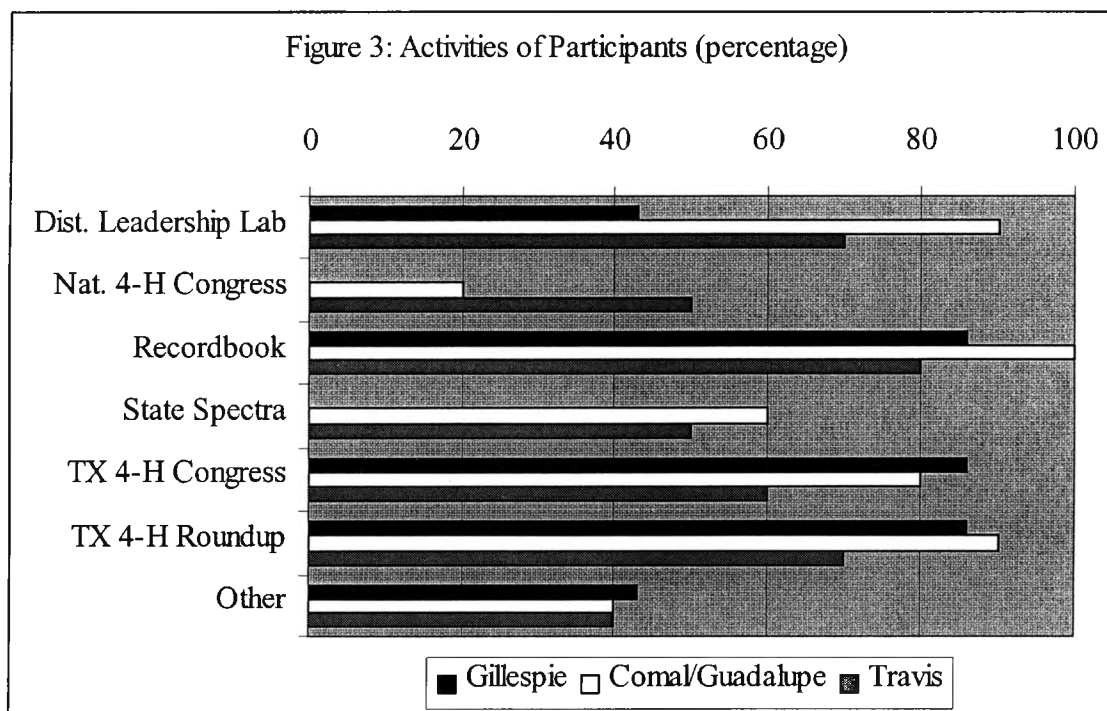
The average number of years of 4-H involvement among the Comal/Guadalupe County group (suburban) was 11.3, with the lowest and highest number of years being 10 and 13, respectively. All of these participants reported on having served as an officer at both their club and county levels. Half of them had also gone on to serve at the district and state levels.

Food and nutrition was the most active project among the participants, who all reported that they had been involved in it. Nine of the participants noted other projects such as handicraft, leadership, recreation, citizenship, photography, safety, and health. Livestock projects including cattle, swine, goat, sheep, poultry, and rabbit were reported by eight of the Comal/Guadalupe County group participants. Seven identified clothing and textiles as one of their project areas while five noted their public speaking project involvement and only two had done a shooting sports project.

All of the respondents of this suburban group had done a recordbook. Nine reported on their participation in Texas 4-H Roundup and District Leadership Lab while eight were involved in Texas 4-H Congress. State Spectra participation was noted by six of the respondents. Four participants had been involved in other activities including judging (consumer, livestock, and meats), county camp, Bamberger retreat, exchange, and State 4-H Council. Two of the respondents had also participated in National 4-H Congress.

Among the Travis County group (urban), the average number of years spend in 4-H was 10.2, with the lowest and highest reports being 7 and 11, respectively. Similar to the results found among the other two county groups, all of Travis County participants had held offices at their club level. Eight of them had also served at the county level, while four and one had been an officer at the district and state levels, respectively.

Nine of the urban group reported being involved in livestock projects such as rabbit, swine, poultry, sheep, goat, and cattle, as well as the food and nutrition project.



The clothing and textiles and public speaking projects were marked by six of the participants. The same number also identified their other projects, which included consumer judging, photography, woodworking, community service, leadership,

backpacking, and natural resources. Shooting sports was a project reported by two of this group's participants.

Recordbooks had been done by 8 of the participants—one even noted having had a state-winning book. Seven of the respondents had been involved in Texas 4-H Roundup and District Leadership Lab. Five reported their participation in State Spectra and National 4-H Congress. Other activities identified by the participants included Ag Ambassador, Share the Fun, Washington Focus, and being a camp counselor at Brownwood State 4-H camp.

Overall 4-H Interstate Exchange Program Experiences

The average duration of 4-H interstate exchange program participation was 1.857 years among the group of Gillespie County respondents. In that time, these participants had exchanged with 4-H'ers in New Mexico, Tennessee, and Virginia. One respondent also reported about her experience with a 4-H intrastate exchange in which they hosted and were hosted by a 4-H group in another part of Texas.

When asked to rate their overall 4-H interstate exchange program experiences, on average the rural participants rated it at 4.714 on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being the highest. As presented in Table 5, the mode, median, and standard deviations for the group's rating were 5, 5, and 0.48795, respectively. In explaining her answer, Julie said it was a "good learning experience [and an] opportunity to visit nation's capital." John reported, "It was an excellent way of seeing how other people live in a different part of the country." And Sam shared this: "Driving from Texas to Tennessee. Meeting other folks across the nation with the same values and interests as myself. Seeing agriculture in another state and historical sites." The rest simply noted the opportunity to travel out of their

Table 5: Overall 4-H Interstate Exchange Program Experiences

| | <i>Gillepie (rural)</i> | <i>Comal/Guadalupe (suburban)</i> | <i>Travis (urban)</i> |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| # of Years Participated (average) | 1.857 | 2.9 | 5.5 |
| Rating (1-5): Average | 4.714 | 4.8 | 4.6 |
| Mode | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Median | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.487950036 | 0.421637 | 0.516398 |

immediate area to see new things. The respondents were asked to share anything else that would help the researcher better understand their experiences, and the only comment came from Tim, who said, “Fun, good travel, but not necessarily life-altering.”

The average Comal/Guadalupe County 4-H interstate exchange respondent participated in exchange for 2.9 years. This case study’s participants had a wide variety of experiences exchanging with 4-H groups from California, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington. When ratings of the participants’ overall experience in the 4-H interstate exchange program were compiled, the researcher found the average, mode, median, and standard deviation were 4.8, 5, 5, and 0.421637, respectively. These figures can also be found in Table 5.

When asked to explain their ratings, several of the respondents highlighted the opportunities their experiences provided for seeing other aspects of life across the country. Sarah reported, “Overall, it was a great opportunity to travel to a place I had not been and with many of my friends. I also developed new friendships.” Sally said she got “to know others from my part of the state and another state.” Mary identified “learning

about other places first hand, traveling out-of-state without my parents, [and] meeting others and making friends.” Karen also mentioned that it was good to see how 4-H programs worked in other parts of the country. A closing comment was provided by Michelle, who said, “One thing 4-H'ers learn is to work for sponsorships and value the money they earn to travel.” During his follow up interview, Rick said, “It was a really good experience. It was really unique to basically be a part of someone else’s family for a week and get to see a different part of the country.” Here are a few other comments from the interviews:

Overall, it gives people the chance to see the workings, the community, people, etc., not just a tourist. See how they live, where they work. It’s a different kind of experience. Those groups got to see some of the same things when we hosted them. (Karen)

Another advantage of exchange: I knew the people in exchange, but they became my best friends because we had to do so much together to go on that trip. It wasn’t just the week we spent on the exchange, it was everything we did leading up to that (fundraisers, rodeo, etc.). We became good friends and we did other 4-H things together. (Michelle)

For the Travis County group, their average duration of exchange participation was much higher, at 5.5 years (see Table 5). States with which these respondents did exchanges included Colorado, Idaho, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. Overall, the group rated their exchange participation as a 4.6, with four of the respondents rating it a 4 while the rest (six) rated it at 5. The mode, median, and standard deviation were 5, 5, and 0.516398, respectively.

In describing their experiences, Cori noted the “lifelong memories taking Amtrack three days across country,” making new friends, and experiencing “life in other states.” Ann said, “The program taught me how to adapt to different situations, so even if I may not have been having the time of my life I still learned a great deal.” Others made these comments:

It helped me grow and become more outgoing. It was an experience I couldn’t have gotten from any other program. And not only did I develop new relationships with the people from the other state, but I also strengthened my friendships with the others who traveled/hosted from my county. (Kate)

It was the best experience I’d ever had. It made me grow a lot. Learned how they raise their animals and what kind of qualifications their animals had to have for their shows because they are completely different from ours (weights, raising in different way, spending so many hours, etc.).

(Carol, follow up interview)

Several of the respondents also shared their comments when asked for anything else that would help the researcher better understand their 4-H interstate exchange program experiences. According to David, “Each trip is different. The ability to meet and associate with other people helps prepare participants for future experiences in life.” Clyde reported, “I believe that the program let me see things that I would have never seen otherwise. It opened my eyes to the other 4-H programs out there.” Ben said, “I grew as a person. It is the whole 4-H program that develops character. This program allows less

fortunate kids to travel...adds to an education. Thank you for allowing me to participate in your project.” Finally, Anne shared this during her follow up interview:

It was just really neat to like...especially when we exchanged with a state that had something special. In Pennsylvania, we went to the Liberty Bell. That was a really neat thing, just to have the experience to go there...because that's something you hear about you don't always get to see.

Hosting Experiences

The average duration of the Gillespie County participants' hosting experience was 1.5 years. Three of the participants did not host, and only one hosted once. 4-H groups from New Mexico, Tennessee, and Virginia were hosted by the rural participants. One participant (Jane) also reported on an intrastate exchange with another county in Texas.

On average, the Comal/Guadalupe County participants hosted for 1.4 years. While everyone hosted at least once, four of the respondents hosted more than one time—twice to be exact. The participated hosted 4-H members from the following states: California, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington.

The average years of hosting experience for the Travis County group was 2.8 years. Three of the participants hosted twice, 6 hosted three times, and one even hosted four times. This urban group hosted 4-H members from eight states including Colorado, Idaho, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee.

Of the Gillespie County respondents who hosted more than once, the New Mexico and Tennessee hosting experiences were reported as the most enjoyable. Saying

that Tennessee was his most enjoyable trip, Sam explained, “I was older and the student had more interest in Texas than the New Mexico student did.”

Of the four suburban participants who hosted more than once, the hosting experiences with Kentucky and Tennessee were selected as the most enjoyable. When asked about their selections, Mary reported that she and her guest simply got along better, and Karen noted that she had more in common with this group. Also, Sarah said “I got along well with all of the kids from there—they seemed to have backgrounds similar to ours.”

All of the Travis County participants had at least two hosting experiences to choose from, and when asked which was their most enjoyable experience, they chose Idaho, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, and Oregon. In explaining his selection, Ben said, “My first time in 1992 was the most enjoyable. We really connected with each other. We stayed up late [and] talked about the differences between Idaho and Texas. Mark had a really great time in Texas.” Similarly, Kate reported, “It's hard to choose but I'd probably say Oregon, just because it was my second time to host a group and I wasn't as nervous. I enjoyed both groups but I felt more comfortable with the group from Oregon.”

On the flip side, several of the respondents also shared what their least enjoyable experiences were. As far as reports from the Gillespie County respondents, two of the three who had hosted more than once identified the New Mexico and the intrastate hosting experiences. Sam chose the New Mexico trip, saying, “I guess I was probably too young to remember.”

The least enjoyable experience was more difficult for the Comal/Guadalupe County respondents to identify. For example, Mary said, “They were both fun, so I can't

say the other was bad.” Exchanges with two states—California and Oregon—were specifically named, and Karen noted her reason being a difference in age and that she and her exchangee did not have a lot in common. Sarah said, “It was not a bad experience, just not as good as Tennessee—the kids were much different, not rural.”

The Travis County participants identified experiences with Idaho, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, and Tennessee—four of these five states had been previously named by the other participants as their most enjoyable experience. Kate did comment, however, “I don't want to rate either experience as least enjoyable because they were both wonderful experiences.” Age and personality clashes were cited as issues. In explaining why she selected the experience as her least enjoyable, Cindy said, “The young lady that I hosted didn't agree with a lot of stuff. She caused problems with me and my family. She found out that other kids were getting to go out and party and other fun stuff.” Ben has this to share:

When we hosted Oregon we had an extension agent or parent that just made things very unpleasant. The boy I was hosting was her son, so she put lots of restrictions on us. It made it very hard to relate.

When asked to focus on one of their hosting experiences, the rural (Gillespie County) participants chose to rate and discuss the experiences with New Mexico, Tennessee, and Virginia. On average, the participants rated their hosting experience as 4.5, based on a scale from one to five. The mode, median, and standard deviation for this rating were 5, 4.5, and 0.57735, respectively. This information is also provided, along with the data from the other two case studies, in Table 6. In discussing her hosting experience with New Mexico, Jane said, “We got along great with similar backgrounds.”

Sam focused on the hosting experience with Tennessee, saying, “We were able to see a lot and many activities were going on around Fredricksburg at that time.” Debra’s only comment was this, “We had one girl. She was kind of shy.” Jane also shared this during her follow up interview:

It was neat seeing how they reacted to what we thought might be interesting in Fredricksburg, what they liked, what they didn’t like, what their interests were, what their hobbies were, and how different our families were. She was an only child, so that was a little different coming from a family of 4.

Next, the respondents were asked to rate the similarities between them and their exchange. In looking at the Gillespie County group as a whole, the average, mode,

Table 6: Hosting Experiences

| | <i>Gillepie (rural)</i> | <i>Comal/Guadalupe (suburban)</i> | <i>Travis (urban)</i> |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| # of Years to Host (average) | 1.5 | 1.4 | 2.8 |
| Rating of hosting experience (1-5): | | | |
| Average | 4.5 | 4.8 | 4.6 |
| Mode | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Median | 4.5 | 5 | 5 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.577350269 | 0.421637 | 0.516398 |
| Rating of similarities (1-5): | | | |
| Average | 4.5 | 3.7 | 3.9 |
| Mode | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Median | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Standard Deviation | 1 | 0.9486833 | 1.197219 |
| Rating of impact on family (1-5): | | | |
| Average | 3.75 | 4 | 4.4 |
| Mode | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Median | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.966092 |

median, and standard deviations were 4.5, 5, 5, and 1, respectively. They were then asked to explain their ratings. Jane reported that she and her exchangee had the “same family background and likes.” Sam also noted his similarities with that of his exchangee, saying, “He grew up on a cattle ranch that was quite large for Tennessee and he showed cattle and pigs.” On the other hand, Debra said that she and her exchange partner had “different family life backgrounds” since her parents were still married and the parents of her exchangee were divorced.

Since hosting involves more than just the 4-H member, the participants were also asked to rate the impact the hosting experience had on their families. Again, looking at the overall Gillespie County group, their average, mode, median, and standard deviation were 3.75, 4, 5, and 0.5, respectively. Sam offered this explanation, “My parents love people in 4-H, they did everything they could to support the 4-H program.” During the follow up interview, Jane commented on the impact on her parents:

For [parents], it was just one more person, like a friend over for a week. It wasn't any extra hardship or anything. Of course they were probably glad when both of us were gone to New Mexico. It wasn't any big difficulty. I think they enjoyed doing it. We had hosted some German exchange students for a month at a time, so a week at a time wasn't a big deal trying to get people back and forth.

Debra had this to share during her follow up interview: “It wasn't that big of a deal because she was a girl and I had two sisters, so it was just one more person. We were use to sharing. She was closer to my sisters' ages, and hung out with them.”

The researcher also asked the participants to identify one positive and one negative outcome their family experienced during hosting. As far as the positive outcomes, Gillespie County 4-H alumnus Jane mentioned “learning about different traditions and customs,” while others had more humorous comments to add. Debra said she “got to show her an armadillo,” while Sam said he “learned about ranching in Tennessee and that Texas has much better B-B-Q.” The only comment regarding a negative outcome was made by Sam, who said, “They [family] did not get to go to Tennessee.”

During the follow up interviews, the participants were asked to share a comment they thought their parents might make about the 4-H exchange program. Jane had this to say, “They would probably just say it was a valuable thing that we were able to see different cultures and sights within Texas and outside of Texas, opening the doors to us to different opportunities that are out there.” Debra reported, “They enjoyed showing what they have, teaching...we lived out in the country on a farm. They enjoyed showing people experiences that they’ve never seen before. They really liked it, I think.”

Even with several of the Comal/Guadalupe County participants only having hosted once, there was quite a variety of hosting experiences for them to focus on; these included the groups from Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Washington. The participants rated their hosting experience, and their responses averaged to 4.8, along with the mode, median, and standard deviation of 5, 5, and 0.421637 (Table 6). With the exception of two, who rated their experience a 4, everyone in the group rated their hosting experience at 5. In support of her high rating, Sally said, “The exchange students were wonderful! We till keep in touch.” Rick reported enjoying

“meeting, hosting, and getting acquainted with another 4-H'er.” Vicki also shared that she “learned a lot about a different ‘culture’ (the South) than I grew up in.” In the follow up interview, Lori had this to say about hosting:

We spent the week just basically showing them around San Antonio and our area here. We went to the state capitol, just kind of showing them more about how our 4-H experience in Texas, especially our family’s experience kind of worked. We were more involved in our school activities than I think she was, so it was kind of neat for her to see our lifestyle around here, not just our 4-H experience. It gives you a chance when they come down, it’s almost like showing off your lifestyle. Even if you don’t think it’s that great or whatever, it’s just something new to them.

In regards to their ratings on the similarities between them and their exchangee, the average, mode, median, and standard deviation were 3.7, 4, 4, and 0.94868, respectively. Most of the suburban participants reported that they had similar backgrounds, interests, and activities. Jim said, “We even had the same last name. Our personalities were both pretty mellow and he liked a lot of the things I liked. It was a fun experience.” Lori reported that her exchangee “was younger, had an affluent family, and [was] rebellious. She added, “I was more conservative.” Sally shared this, “Our personalities were a lot alike and we seemed to enjoy similar activities. We did, however, have some different projects/interests that were fun to learn about.” Finally, Fred urged that he and his exchangee were “different but matched well; [it] would not be fun if we were the same.”

Next, the respondents provided their perspective on the impact the hosting experience had on their family. Everyone rated the impact as a 4 (see Table 6). Sally reported that she and her family “enjoyed meeting 4-H’ers and learning about their program.” Lori said it was a “great experience, but we have people over all the time, so a large group of new people wasn’t new.” In addition, Fred pointed out that his mom did some of the driving during the hosting experience. During her follow up interview, Sally shared this: “Financially, it had an impact, but it didn’t keep us from doing it. [It] would have been nice to have done more fundraising.”

When asked to provide one positive outcome their family experienced through hosting, there were a variety of responses provided by the Comal/Guadalupe County group. There was talk about the fun, friendships made, and various cultures they got to learn about. Sally said, “[It was an] enjoyable experience and [I] was able to get to know others in own county better. To see things in our area we take for granted.” Sarah and Karen both discussed how their families became well acquainted with their exchangees, and even stayed in touch with them for several years following the exchange. While most could not recall any negative outcome, a few expressed concerns about being constantly on the go and trying to host one exchangee among three Texas sisters in the same home.

The participants were asked during the follow up interviews to share a comment they thought their parents might make about the 4-H exchange program. This is what Lori reported:

I don’t know if my parents would do a school exchange for like a whole semester or year, just because we’re so active. I think they enjoyed it. My

parents are pretty outgoing, people- people, so I think that they enjoyed it,...and they enjoyed making new friendships and meeting new people.

Among a variety of hosting experiences, the Travis County participants chose the following to report on: Idaho, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, and Oregon. Four of the 10 respondents, as seen in Table 6, rated their hosting experience as a 4, while the rest scored it a 5. The resulting average, mode, median, and standard deviation were 4.6, 5, 5, and 0.516398, respectively. In support of their ratings, the participants shared several comments. Ben said, “The exchange groups pulled off what I would consider the perfect exchange. Things went well, everyone participated. People were able to be themselves. Plans that were made were executed.” Cindy reported, “The two girls who stayed with me, both got along with my family and friends. They fit in so well that we actually felt like a family.” Similarly, Ron commented that “All the ones I hosted were willing to participate in planned activities and follow our household rules when they stayed with us.” During her follow up interview, Carol said, “Hosting was difficult at first because you do have new people coming into your home. Then again, it was good because they got to see how our family lived, our daily chores, how our family worked.” Here are a few additional comments:

I enjoyed hosting because I got to show people from an entirely different area of the United State the way we live in Texas. It's neat experiencing different cultures and lifestyles - even as simple as the differences in words we use and accents we have. Getting to meet new people and have fun is why I participated. (Kate)

Whether it was leaving clothes or towels around or messing up something, it really taught you how to be a good house guest, how to take care of your own stuff because you have somebody in your home. You really take note of how they handle themselves. That was beneficial to me. (Ben, follow up interview)

The responses regarding the similarities between the Travis County respondents and their exchangee were a little more spread out among the group, making for an average, mode, median, and standard deviation of 3.9, 4, 4, and 1.19719, respectively. Cori, in explaining her rating of 1, had this to say about her exchangee: “She had a less appealing family support system living only with her mom.” The rest of the participants rated the similarities on the higher end of the scale, with one selecting 3, five marking 4, and the final three selecting 5. In explaining his rating, Ron said, “We all came from small town/agricultural backgrounds and family oriented structures.” On the other hand, David pointed out how their “similarities countered the differences.” Here are some additional comments regarding similarities:

He was different in his approach and activity in 4-H. He was articulate where as I was an untamed heart, full of energy, and active. I was different to him and he could relate to me and I to him. I could appreciate him because I was different than Mark. (Ben)

Most of the people in the group were younger than I was. Also there were some differences in our families' structures (her mother had died and her father was raising the family alone, she was the younger sister and I was

the older sister, etc.). Overall, we were interested in similar things and liked doing the same activities. (Kate)

Looking at the impact the hosting experience had on the family, the urban respondents averaged a 4.4, also providing a mode, median, and standard deviation of 5, 5, 0.966092, respectively. Of the ten participants, six of them scored the impact at 5, while three rated in a 4. A variety of comments were made regarding the experience's impact on the family. Cori pointed this out: [It is] impossible to host someone without it affecting the whole family. Food and transportation especially nice after driving age if it's okay with guest to ride with students." She also had this to share during her follow up interview: "Hectic schedules of trying to have things to do to entertain. Whether you watch something different on tv or you don't talk about personal family issues because you've got company around all the time." Kate reported, "My parents had never hosted any type of group or individual before. They extremely enjoyed getting to meet the group and share in the experience. They enjoyed it so much so that they hosted three times total." Similarly, Clyde commented how his parents "loved the exchange program after the first year." Cindy, however, pointed out that "hosting was like a 'heart rate'—good rhythm one time and flat line the next." While Anne rated the impact at a 2, she shared this information during her follow up interview:

I was young when [my older sister] starting hosting—I was probably nine, so I was use to it. It really wasn't that big of a deal. Me and my sister always shared a room, so sharing it with another person or just having to share with my brothers so they'd have room, it really wasn't a big deal. It was just kind of like having an extra person there. You just want to show

them the best time you can. It was a good reason to have good food and always go somewhere, always have something to do.

When asked about positive outcomes experienced by their family, the Travis County respondents shared some distinct comments. Kate said her family enjoyed “developing a relationship with our guests and learning about how people live in other parts of the U.S. were the biggest positives from hosting.” Cindy made a similar claim, reporting how her family met new people from other states, learned “about their lives and being able to compare their similarities.” Ben’s comment pointed out: “Learning to relate with someone we really did not know before the hosting. Building trust based on 4-H.”

The participants were also asked to share a negative impact experienced by the family as a result of hosting. A few had comments to share, but several noted that they could not think of one or did not have a negative outcome. Cori referred to having to put up with “another bratty little sister,” while Anne had this to say: We really catered to the guest and went to tourist places that our family had already been several times.” The negative outcome reported by Ben was, “We had to wait a whole year to see one another again.”

To shed additional light on the impact the hosting experience had on parents, the participants were asked—during their follow up interviews—to share a comment they thought their parents might make about the 4-H exchange program. Here’s what one urban participant had to say:

I think my mother would say it was a lot of fun. I can see where a parent would be like ‘that was really was a pain in the neck for a week.’ Also

can see how parents are real receptive to having them living in their home and providing them a nice vacation or trip away from home. (Travis)

Travel Experiences

On average, the Gillespie County participants traveled 1.2857 years, and this included trips to New Mexico, Tennessee, and Virginia. Again, the intrastate exchange trip was also mentioned. Some of the places they visited included the Texas panhandle, caverns, National 4-H Center, and Washington, D.C. Since some of the groups had traveled by van rather than by plane, they were able to see all the states from Texas to their destinations. Jane reported this information during her follow up interview:

Driving through New Mexico, you drove totally flat to wonderful hills, right on the border of Colorado. You're just driving into wonderful scenery, a different climate, different atmosphere, which was pretty neat...We got to see lots of things...a lot of things were quite a ways from them. For New Mexico, the drive was interesting, just going through it. I guess that was the neat thing. Even going to Anahuac, just being able to visit different parts of Texas and then going to a different state that we'd never been to. You don't just go visit. You don't get to see the nitty-gritty stuff that you do being there and living with someone for a week.

The average number of years that the Comal/Guadalupe group of participants took part in traveling was 1.3. Their trips included travel to the states of California, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington. The areas they visited and sightseeing they did included Canada, Amish communities, farm tours, state

capitols, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Hollywood, and the Blue Ridge Mountains. In speaking during her follow up interview about her trip to Washington, Lori said:

We went horseback riding, and we went to Canada one day, which was the neatest thing. I'd never been out of the country, not even to Mexico. So going to Canada, that was really neat, and taking the ferry and being on the coastline, seeing the west coast was kind of neat. Eating fish that I had...types of fish that I had never eaten before. The most fish I've eaten was catfish.

Among the Travis County group, the average number of years the respondents reported for their traveling experiences was 2.5 years. Only one had traveled only once while four had done it twice, another 4 three times, and the last member had traveled four times. Their trips included being hosted by 4-H groups in seven states including Idaho, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. The participants did a variety of sightseeing and activities during their travel including a train ride, camping, horseback riding, dance, headwaters of Mississippi River, museums, and industries. Kate had this to share:

On my trip to Ohio we saw the National Football League Hall of Fame, we went to an amusement park on the Great Lakes, and saw the river that divides Ohio and West Virginia. There were also group activities we went to in and around the area we traveled to like a dance, barbeque, etc. In Oregon, we took a boat tour down the Snake River, went to a pioneer's museum, and again did several group activities in and right outside of Baker City.

Only one of the Gillespie County respondents had traveled out of state more than once, and this person chose Tennessee as his most enjoyable trip. Jane, who had also participated in the intrastate exchange, noted that the out of state trip to New Mexico was her most enjoyable simply because it included “out of state travel.”

With the exception of three Comal/Guadalupe County respondents, who traveled twice, the rest (seven) participated in travel experiences only once. For the three who had a choice of their most enjoyable trip, one (Sarah) reported that both trips were great while the other two discussed their reasons for selecting a particular trip as most enjoyable. Mary chose Georgia, noting how she “got to go the state 4-H camps, and we had lots of unstructured time with our host family.” Highlighting her trip to Kentucky, Karen reported that they had “good activities and a lot of activities.”

Among the states that were selected as the most enjoyable travel experience by the Travis County respondents were Idaho, Minnesota, Ohio, and Oregon. Kate noted,

I enjoyed both trips because I had never been to either areas of the United States before then. I say and experienced so many things that are different from life in Texas. I can't rate one better than the other.

Ron reported, “[We] got to ride Amtrak train from Austin to Pasco, Washington then back to Texas via Chicago. Giving us chance to see the scenic country side.” Ben selected his Oregon trip and said, “[I] felt like I educated myself. The trip was meaningful and fun. Absorbed the whole trip.”

When asked about their least enjoyable trip, Debra (Gillespie County) reported the “long drive in a van with 10 other kids.” Jane, in discussing her intrastate exchange as the least enjoyable, said, “I was younger and not really use to being away from home.”

Only one Comal/Guadalupe County respondent reported a least enjoyable trip. Karen selected Oregon, saying, “[I] did not get along with host family well; house that I stayed in was filthy and girl was not very nice to me or others in group.”

As far as the travel experiences selected as least enjoyable, the Travis County respondents noted their trips to Idaho, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Tennessee. In explaining his selection, Ben said, “I didn't like the family I stayed with and they had a family member die while we were there and living arrangements were not good.” Clyde reported, “I stayed with a family of six. Plus two exchange students and a chaperone.” Ron urged that they had “too much planned activity, not enough time to get to know family staying with individually.”

For most of the participants in the Gillespie County group, it was easy to focus on one trip because that was the only travel experience they had through the 4-H interstate exchange program. Exchanges with New Mexico, Tennessee, and Virginia were discussed. On average, the participants rated their travel experience as 4.4, again based on a scale from one to five. The mode, median, and standard deviation for this rating were 4, 4, and 0.54772, respectively. This information is also summarized in Table 7. In explaining their ratings, Julie simply said it was a “very positive experience,” while Bob noted that he “was totally different than host family, but I got to see a different way of life.”

The respondents were then asked to rate the similarities between them and their host family. Examining the group as a whole, the average, mode, median, and standard deviations were 3.4, 4, 4, and 1.34164, respectively. To explain their ratings, both Debra and Julie noted similarities such as farming and ranching backgrounds and small rural

towns and schools. On the lower end of the scale, Bob reported that his host family “lived in town, in a trailer house, [and] stayed inside most of day. I was use to always being outside working.”

Table 7: Travel Experience

| | <i>Gillepie (rural)</i> | <i>Comal/Guadalupe (suburban)</i> | <i>Travis (urban)</i> |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| # of Years to Travel (average) | 1.2857 | 1.3 | 2.5 |
| Rating of visit to area: | | | |
| Average | 4.4 | 4.9 | 4.2 |
| Mode | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Median | 4 | 5 | 4.5 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.547722558 | 0.316228 | 1.032796 |
| Rating of similarities: | | | |
| Average | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.4 |
| Mode | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Median | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.341640786 | 0.966092 | 1.349897 |

One of the topics covered during the follow up interviews dealt with the issue of staying in someone else’s home. In discussing her experience, Jane shared this:

It was fine. You’re kind of nervous, not quite sure what to expect, what their rooms, their houses are like. They made me feel very welcome and they tried to do whatever they could to accommodate you. Their parents were really nice, always very welcoming, but just different eating habits, what they enjoyed. It’s always a little bit different whenever you’re staying with someone else. You’re never quite sure what they’re going to serve you. I don’t know if my parents would have been as easily...would

have allowed us to just go stay with a stranger. They hosted...they'd had this person in their house, they knew...you can read someone pretty well after hosting them for a week, what kind of family life, language, how they act. You feel safe...you're spending the night in a house, but during the whole week, you're with all the other kids and chaperones. You're doing the activities together. If there was problem, you knew you contact chaperones. There's a security, you're not just sending them off by themselves. It's with a group.

Also during the interview, the researcher asked the participants if they would have been able to travel to these places and do these things if it was not for the 4-H interstate exchange program. Jane reported this:

I wouldn't have been allowed to go by myself. I wasn't by myself, I was with a group, but it was 4-H related. You knew that there was going to be something responsible in that whole program. 4-H was promoting it, it was going to be a good program. It was reasonable cost because you are staying with somebody else. Any income level can participate. That's the advantage...you're not needing this whole big chunk of change to be able to travel there.

Similar to that of the Gillespie County group, it was fairly easy for most of the Comal/Guadalupe County respondents to focus on a travel experience since most of them only had one. Despite the lack of choices, the focused on their travel experiences to California, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, and Washington, which allowed for a variety of experiences to be highlighted. With the exception of one participant, who rated

her experience a 4, everyone rated their travel experience a 5. This made for an average, mode, median, and standard deviation of 4.9, 5, 5, and 0.316228, respectively. In explaining her rating, Mary reported, “The culture is very different, so I learned a lot about their culture.” Vicki commented on her experience, saying it was “very interesting and different from where I lived.” Lori shared this, “I had a great time and saw things I probably wouldn't have ever seen otherwise.” Rick, in his follow up interview, said, “I seriously think is one of the most unique experiences I’ve ever had. It’s totally different that you don’t have the opportunity to do.” Finally, Karen shared this during her interview:

What sticks out in my mind about exchange is that I got to take some really fun trips with my best friends. The group of people I was friends with then is still my group of friends now. We look back at those trips as just being such fun times because literally I went on vacation with my best friends. It was neat to hear how they lived, things they were involved in. A week long of doing all these fun things with your new friends and you best friends from home.

Three from the Comal/Guadalupe County group rated their similarities with their host family as 2, meaning they felt they were somewhat different. Sarah, in discussing her exchange said that her “family was not as structured as mine—did not have much in common with my host.” Vicki commented, “They were well off and had servants.” Jim pointed out that exchange is about meeting people who are different from you, saying, “That is what makes exchange programs what they are. If we were all the same, why do exchanges? It's kind of pointless if my family was like theirs.” The rest of the

respondents that they were somewhat similar to their host family by selecting a rating of 4. They identified similar family structures and interests while they also noted differences in activities and parental employment.

As part of their follow up interview, the participants were asked what it was like for them to stay in someone else's home. While the reports were somewhat similar, each suburban respondent had their own unique experiences. Here are some of their comments:

At first, it was kind of weird. It was a completely different environment. All the bedroom doors were closed, ours are completely open. It was just weird for me. My mom cooks, but we had one or two meals at that house. My dad farms and my mom works in town. His dad delivered vending machines and mom sold insurance. Going to a guy's house, that was weird, but it was nothing. We exchanged gifts, and I got some really neat stuff. At first, you ask questions (like where things are at), but by the time it's over, they're like make yourself at home. Being at a stranger's house, so first night is weird. Overall, they were really friendly. (Sally)

It makes you more self-reliant, 'my mom's not here, so I need to take care of things and not spend too much money.' And then of course, just adjusting to that family, their habits, and the bed you have to sleep on. 4-H helps you learn coping skills. You are thrown into a situation, for lack of a better word, with, ok here's your family, now you're staying there for a week...deal with it. That's a lot like a real job because you're thrown

into a situation where you have to cope. Learning the way people live.

(Michelle)

The travel experiences that the Travis County respondents chose to focus on included their trips to Idaho, Kentucky, Ohio, Oregon, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania. The ratings among this group were a little more spread out, making for an average, mode, median, and standard deviation of 4.2, 5, 4.5, 1.032796, respectively. This information is also summarized in Table 7. Among the participants, one rated her experience as a 2, one a 3, three a 4, and the other half scored it at 5. To shed light on her rating, Kim added this comment, “[I] stayed with a girl different than my host girl. This girl wanted to party all the time, get drunk, go to wild parties.” Carol said, “I had some fun but thought it could have been better.” Here are some additional comments from the urban respondents:

Oregon was beautiful and so different from Texas. The town we stayed in is much smaller than Austin, so I got a feel of small town life. Also, it was amazing to look out the window and see mountains all around - we definitely don't have that in Central Texas. Everything seemed so clean and fresh there. It just seemed like such a nice place to live. (Kate)

[We] participated (shot off) fireworks for entire town. Really enjoyed getting to interact with other cultures of people. Every town has its own culture, especially being there during 4th of July. Being a part of a different culture when the culture comes together was special and unique. It really made me feel thankful for where I'm from and made me feel well received as far away as Idaho and Oregon. There were other people out

there like myself that you can connect with through 4-H. I think the experience staying in someone else's home makes you aware of what kind of person you are. I think it's a culture thing, it really is learning someone else's culture. That's what I think I gained most from. (Ben, follow up interview)

A lot of the people I did exchange with are still my best friends. Good to get to see different parts of the country and it's always better to have a host to show you around instead of just being somewhere on your own, trying to figure out what there's to do. (Cori, follow up interview)

That was different because whenever I went, I hadn't ever really stayed with a family that I didn't really know. I knew the student that came down. It was completely different. For the first little bit, I was nervous and kind of uncomfortable. Even though I'd already met the person, they had come down the summer before, it was still kind of awkward. Overall, the families were very nice that I stayed with. They made me feel very at home. I could say that I grew just knowing how they live their lives, about Oregon, how they work, what time they got up and starting working on their stuff—completely different from what we do here. All together, very amazing. (Carol, follow up interview)

There was more wide spread agreement among the Travis County group on how similar the respondents were to their host families. One participant scored this question a 1, 2 was the rating from two, one chose 3, three selected 4, and the final two marked 5. This spread led to an average, mode, median, and standard deviation to be 3.4, 4, 4, and

1.349897, respectively. Ron reported, “My host family participated as ‘a family,’ not just teenagers in all activities. My parents always did things as a family with everyone being a part of the program.” Referencing her exchangee, Carol said, “She was younger and we really weren't on the same maturity level. I found it hard to talk to her.” With a more extreme response, Kim stated, “She didn't want to take me to any of the planned activities, she always wanted to go out drinking.”

As a part of the follow up interview, the urban respondents were asked if they would have been able to travel to these places and do these things if it was not for the 4-H interstate exchange program. Anne said, “We can’t drive to Kentucky randomly and go to Churchill Downs. When you go on vacation, you just get to see the surface. You don’t get to learn the best spots to eat, roads to take.” And Cori shared this:

Growing up, since my parents had a farm, we never really got to take family vacations together, so it kind of provided me with a good outlet to go exploring the country, which I never would have been able to do otherwise.

Similarities/Differences in 4-H Programs

During the follow up interviews, the respondents were asked about their perceptions regarding the similarities and differences between the state 4-H programs. For the most part, the participants reported more similarities than differences. Debra from Gillespie County recalled that the kids in the other states did more in the way of home projects like sewing and cooking while the Texas 4-H’ers were more active with ag projects like livestock. Jane also reported, “They were more into woodworking, aquatic

science, and arts and crafts. It wasn't just the beef, swine, etc. There were different projects that were more active in those areas, which was a little unique."

For the suburban group from Comal/Guadalupe County, Lori shared this:
 Their industry was different (forestry, fishing). We were expecting to see their animals. They did more community service; we did more leadership. We did different things—most of them had horses. We didn't see a lot of farms or crops like we were use to. They had limited space, small pastures, had rabbits and horses.

Both Cori and Anne from Travis County felt that the 4-H projects and activities were similar, but Anne also said that she thought they may have "raised some sort of animal that was a little bit different than what we do here." On the other hand, Carol pointed this out:

One person in the club did it all. Don't have elected people—that was one thing that was really different, usually a senior of the group that did all of the reporting on everything. I like the team effort and it wasn't like that there.

Current Involvement in 4-H and Exchange

The researcher was also interested in investigating the participants and their families' current involvement in 4-H and the interstate exchange program. In the Gillespie County group, two respondents reported being currently involved in 4-H while only one noted their current involvement with exchange. For those who were not currently involved in either 4-H or the exchange program, most were not sure whether or

not they would become involved in the future. One even noted that he was “too old” to be involved.

The responses from the suburban case study group were somewhat similar. Half of the Comal/Guadalupe County participants reported being involved in the 4-H program at the time they completed the questionnaire. None of them, however, noted current involvement with exchange. While some were not sure of their future involvement, three marked their intend on becoming involved in 4-H while two said they planned to become involved in the exchange program. Karen commented, “Someday when I have children.”

Within the third case study, two reported being currently involved in 4-H while none of them claimed to have been presently taking part in the exchange program. Like the other two case studies, the Travis County respondents also were not sure of their future involvement in either 4-H or the exchange program, but four of them did indicate future plans to taking part in exchange. One example of future 4-H program involvement, Ron said that his family currently supported the local stock show, and he hopes to become involved in 4-H “as my step son becomes of age to participate.”

Recommended to Others

When asked if they would recommend that the 4-H interstate exchange program be continued, all the Gillespie County respondents said yes. John said, “It is a good experience that (is) beneficial to everybody,” while Debra noted how it “gives kids opportunity to see what others in 4-H are doing in a different part of country.” Sam gave this reason: “It is one of the best programs in 4-H that helps 4-Hers to travel and get a more diverse perspective of other places and people than at home.” They also said they

had or would recommend the 4-H interstate exchange program to younger siblings, friends, and their own children.

Upon being asked if they would recommend the 4-H interstate exchange program be continued, the Comal/Guadalupe County respondents also unanimously said that they would. They also all reported that they would recommend the program to others including family and friends. Rick reported that 4-H members are granted the opportunity to develop friendships across the nation. Lori said, "It was a worthwhile experience like no other in 4-H," and Sally mentioned that it was "a great way to learn more about other places and gain independence." Mary provided this comment, "It's an excellent program for youth to learn about other areas of our country; even though we're all American, our cultures are different."

Again, like with the other two groups, response to whether the 4-H interstate exchange program should be continued were all in the affirmative among the Travis County participants. They also all agreed that they would recommend the program to their own children. Carol reported both on her questionnaire and in the interview that she thought it was a learning experience all young people should have, and that she "would recommend it to anyone." Cori noted that it was fun, and that it was "good to see how other people live and what our country is like." She also added that it "makes you grow up." Anne stated, "It was a great learning experience. Not only did you learn how people live in other parts of the country, but I learned about different industries and historical events that occurred in those states." Kate added this supporting comment:

It opens their eyes to life outside of their communities, challenges them to come out of their shells and meet people, and they get to travel to places

they might otherwise never visit. It's a great opportunity for all teens and I don't think there's another program around like it. It had a positive influence on my life and I wouldn't be the person I am today without having participated.

Three of the respondents did report that they had not recommended the program to younger siblings and/or friends. In their explanations, they reported being the youngest in the family, that their friends were already involved, and that they did not know of anyone to which to recommend it. For example, Cindy said, "I am the youngest and my friends were already involved in the exchange program." Among those who reported that they had recommended it, Cori said, "My siblings and closest friends did participate because of my encouragement."

Challenges and Recommendations

During the follow up interviews, the researcher asked the respondents to identify any additional challenges and discuss their recommendations for future exchanges. The biggest challenge identified in the rural case study group was maintaining a relationship with her exchange. Jane stated,

It was easy to lose contact because we didn't have the e-mail back then, which would have made it a little bit easier. You try to keep in contact, but it's hard to be in contact so you kind of lose that connection and it's something that we've done, but you don't know how that's affected them or keeping up with them. There's the challenge of keeping up a relationship with something you did in 4-H and all of a sudden it's just gone and done.

Among the Comal/Guadalupe County group, issues related to the matching, duration, and funding were discussed. For example, Rick said, “They should try to match up boys with boys and girls with girls.” In addition, Michelle reported several recommendations: “Matching personalities; raising funds; justifying why you’re raising money; how busy kids are; kids have so much going on, summer is limited; kids have to make choices between activities. Sally also suggested a recommendation, saying, “The exchange students from Ohio kept a journal, and I wish I would have done that.

Something to encourage future exchangees to do, and could be used to raise funds.

Recordkeeping system of who has participating and impact made.” Lori said,

Going there for nine days in a place you’ve never been before is a long time. People love to vacation, but when you’re staying with someone else, and you’re dependent on them, nine days is a long time. May not be as long in hotel. You don’t feel like a burden. There were some personalities that didn’t really get along between host and exchangees. There had been family changes in year between hosting and traveling. Something to analyze, check on any family changes during the year between hosting and traveling. Analyzing the personalities in the group a little bit more. Doing the video interviews, better able to match those within the groups; personalities could have been matched up better if we’d done the video; matching up sizes of the groups a little better; notice of what we’d be responsible for (how much money to take, etc.).

In the third case study—the urban group—the feedback was also diverse, touching on matching, group activities, and fundraising. When asked what made certain

trips better than others, Carol said, “Age difference...we were into the same likes, dislikes, found it easier to get along with them.” Ben commented on group verses host family time, saying “Everyone [did] everything together (dance, river boat, camping, etc.). Time with your family was special because most of the activities were done together.” Finally, Cori pointed out some of the concerns she had about money, saying, “Financially, it causes challenges because some people are more willing and have more money to go out and do more of the high-faluting events versus some people not wanting to go anywhere or spend any money.”

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the self-perceived effects of 4-H interstate exchange program experiences among participants in the Texas counties of Gillespie, Comal/Guadalupe, and Travis over the last 20 years. This project's objectives included developing a profile of the participants, studying the effects of demographic attributes on experiences, comparing the hosting and traveling experiences, and discovering the impact of the hosting experience. This chapter presents conclusions based on the results, along with a discussion of recommendations and implications for future research.

Conclusions

Objective 1: Profile of participants

- also did county profile
- provided overall picture of each county, the respondents, and their involvement
- good background in light of limited research

Objective 2: Effects of profile attributes on experience

- relationship with exchangee, not demographics
- full 4-H careers with similar involvements
- all but one is of White ethnicity

- difficult to determine effects

Objective 3: Perceptions of hosting verses traveling

- suited to those doing both
- Gillespie – rated hosting slightly higher
- Comal/Guadalupe – rated travel slightly higher
- Travis – rated hosting higher
- both experiences very valuable

Objective 4: Impact of hosting on family

- only exposure they have
- Gillespie – fewer experiences, less impact
- Comal/Guadalupe – more experiences, greater impact
- Travis – most experiences, most impact

The first objective of this study was to develop a profile of the 4-H interstate exchange program participants. This provided the research a demographic background as well as information about their involvement in 4-H and their exchange program participation. While these factors may not have appeared to have a direct impact on the results of the study, they provided an overall picture of 4-H interstate exchange participants in the three counties. This is especially evident in light of the fact that little research on 4-H exchange existed.

The second objective was to investigate the individual and collective effects of the demographic attributes on the participants' exchange experience. One of the most significant conclusions the researcher formed within each of the case studies was that it was not so much the participants' own demographic variables that impacted their

experience as it was how similar or different their backgrounds were in comparison to their exchange partner. They also often had different 4-H projects and activities, but enjoyed learning about those.

The Gillespie County respondents had had full 4-H careers in which they served as officers at all levels except state and took part in a variety of projects and activities. These factors, along with these and other demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and educational level did not appear to have a significant affect on the exchange experience. The participants were all of the same ethnicity and similar involvement in 4-H, so it was difficult to determine the impact of these factors. Several of them had only traveled and not hosted at all. Having only half the experience definitely limited their ability to fully evaluate the exchange experience.

The Comal/Guadalupe County group was the most involved, active of the three case studies in regards to their 4-H projects, activities, and offices served. It was expected that those who were actively involved in 4-H would also be involved in the interstate exchange program. Like the rural participants, the Comal/Guadalupe County respondents also had fully participated in 4-H with similar involvement in 4-H projects, activities, and offices. Since their ethnicity, number of years in 4-H, and their 4-H exchange involvement were similar, it is difficult to determine the effects these factors had on the participants' exchange experiences. This group generally had more hosting and traveling experiences to discuss, so they had a broader base from which to draw.

Like the other two groups, the Travis County respondents had full 4-H careers of at least seven years that included a variety of projects, activities, and offices served. With such similarities, it was difficult to determine the impact such attributes made on the

participants' exchange experience. They were somewhat less involved in 4-H than those in the suburban group, but more active than the rural group. Again, the researcher expected a high level of 4-H involvement among the exchange group simply because of its level of participation and commitment. While one of the participants is of different ethnicity, it is hard to pinpoint the effect this one factor had on that person's exchange experiences. With several of the participants participating in several exchanges, they had more experiences to choose from, and were better able to compare their various hosting and traveling encounters.

The third objective dealt with a comparison of the hosting and traveling experiences. This was best suited to those who had done both aspects of the exchange because those with only hosting or traveling experiences were not able to truly compare the two experiences. Perhaps some of the hosting experiences are taken for granted by the respondents simply because they are so familiar with their own surroundings. Traveling to another area appeared to help the participants appreciate not only those locales, but their own area as well.

While there was no significant difference in the average rating of their hosting and traveling experiences, the Gillespie County group spoke more highly of their travel experience. They liked the opportunity to show off their area and observe how their exchangees reacted to the similarities and differences they found in Texas. Parents also got to be involved with the hosting experience, whereas most of them typically were not able to travel with the group. Traveling, on the other hand, allowed them to see different parts of the country and the opportunity to travel as they had probably never done before.

Their hosts also gave them insight about their area that they would not have gained as a tourist visiting the area on vacation.

Many of the same conclusions were made from the Comal/Guadalupe Country group. They also enjoyed sharing their family experiences and lifestyle during the hosting period. Respondents also liked showcasing sights and activities within their own area. During their traveling experiences, they got to see how life is different, and how people live in other portions of the United States. Traveling also gave them the opportunity to sample new foods, visit another country, and see things they would not otherwise see. And traveling, much more than hosting, helped them to become more self-reliant because their parents often were not there to solve problems or answer questions for them.

The urban participants rated their traveling experience somewhat lower than their hosting experience, but they spoke very favorably about both. Like the other two case study group participants, the Travis County respondents enjoyed presenting their home area to their exchangee and having them become part of their family for the week. Hosting was sometimes a challenge because new people were staying in your home, but it also helped prepare them to be a better house guest when they traveled. Traveling also had its own challenges like staying with an unfamiliar family or adjusting to differences in meals or family structure. Again, traveling afforded them the opportunity to see different places with their “tour guides.” Traveling also made some become more appreciative of their homes yet thankful to have the opportunity to interact with different cultures.

The fourth and final objective related to how the respondents thought the hosting experience impacted their family—not just themselves. Since most parents do not have the opportunity to travel with the group, hosting is their only experience through exchange. Since the exchangee stays in the home with their partner and his/her parents, there is no doubt that the experience has some impact.

From what the rural participants reported, hosting had a strong impact on the family. Parents seemed to enjoy getting to know a 4-H'er from another state, and showing them what life in Texas was like. Some of the participants either had hosted foreign exchange students or were use to having friends over, so the hosting experience did not affect them as much.

The effects of the hosting experience on the Comal/Guadalupe County families was somewhat similar, but with a slightly greater impact. According to participants' comments, their families liked opening up their home to someone new. It also gave parents the opportunity to get involved with activities and assist with transportation or other needs. This also allowed them to become better acquainted with their exchangee as well as others. For some, the impact was not as great since they were use to having friends over, so hosting an exchangee was not much different. Financially, the hosting experience did sometimes have a negative impact on the family.

The urban families appeared to experience the greatest impact among the three case study groups. Similar to the other groups, these families enjoyed meeting new people, sharing their home with a 4-H member from another part of the country, and learning what life in those other areas is like. Parents did not feel a burden for hosting, but rather were honored to provide a temporary home for their exchangee. Like the

participants in the other two case study groups, the Travis County families were used to hosting children's friends in their homes—having a 4-H'er from another state was not that different.

Recommendations

- Future studies
- Records
- Intrastate exchange opportunities
- Hosting and traveling

Hopefully, the results of this study have laid the groundwork for further exploration of the 4-H interstate exchange program. This study included a limited sample that is not representative of the Texas 4-H interstate exchange program; however, it provided a wealth of information that can now be utilized in providing direction for future research. Following studies should involve a larger, more representative group, which encompasses the diversity of Texas and its 4-H program. Results from such a study can then be generalized to the rest of the 4-H interstate exchange population.

The first recommendation presented above is somewhat dependent on the second recommendation. One of the biggest challenges of locating potential research participants for this study was due to the fact that there is no real record at any level of who has participated in 4-H interstate exchange. The program is typically coordinated on the county level. If further research is to be done, better records of 4-H interstate exchange program participation must be kept. County groups also need contact with exchange groups as they consider whether to initiate the program. Perhaps a stronger network at the national level—a record of who hosted who, traveled where, etc.

This recordkeeping could involve the participants as well. Not only do we need records of who has participated, but it is also recommended that exchange groups encourage their participants to keep a journal of their experiences—both hosting and traveling. Journals would not only be cherished by the participants, but could also be used as a marketing tool for not only future exchangees, but also to potential donors as funds are being raised for exchange activities.

A third recommendation would be to organize and promote 4-H intrastate exchange experiences, perhaps as a stepping stone to exchanges with other states. Because the state of Texas is so large and so diverse, doing exchanges between 4-H groups from different counties would certainly provide opportunities for young people to learn about their own state. This may be best suited for younger members who may not be ready for week-long travels to other states. It could be of shorter duration, would require much less in the way of fundraising, and parents may be more receptive to staying within state lines.

The full 4-H interstate exchange experience includes both hosting and traveling. Several of this study's participants had only traveled or only hosted, so they were able to only provide one side of the overall 4-H interstate exchange experience. The fourth and final recommendation is that 4-H groups make every effort to ensure that participants have the full experience of hosting a 4-H exchangee in their home, as well as traveling and being hosted by that exchangee. Participants are selling themselves short and not experiencing the full effects of the program when they do only one or the other.

Implications

- Years in 4-H

- Limited sample
- Hosted and traveled

Although limitations exist, this study contributes to the extremely limited body of knowledge related to participation in the 4-H interstate exchange program. The respondents provided significant insight into the effects of participating in exchange activities. While the results of this study may not be representative of all exchange participants, they are significant because it conveys the stories and experiences of the participants in this study. These personal accounts are also supported by quantitative data analysis.

There are, however, some issues that surface within this study. The first few questions arose in the profile of the participants within each of the three case studies. Although it has little bearing on the results of this research, the participants likely over-reported their involvement in 4-H. In looking at the guidelines on the 4-H age, which has not changed significantly over several years, “Texas 4-H membership is open to youths between the ages of 9 and 18 on August 31 or 8 and in the third grade and 18” (2002-2003 Texas 4-H Clover, p. 6). With this in mind, the typical career 4-H member is enrolled from 3rd to 12th grades, which is a span of 10 years. Basically, the respondents in Gillespie and Comal/Guadalupe Counties most likely over-reported their years in 4-H as an average of 12 and 11.3 years, respectively. The Travis County participants, on the other hand, were most likely a little more accurate in their reporting of an average of 10.2 years. Besides a loose interpretation of the term involvement, we could also attribute some of this inaccuracy to the fact that many of these participants had older siblings who were involved in 4-H, and thus were themselves taking part in those activities. In

compiling participant profiles in future studies, research instruments would have to be more specific on questions related to involvement verses enrollment in the 4-H program.

A second concern arising from the profiles was the fact that the sample within each case study was limited to a mostly white, often female majority. From this study, it appears that the 4-H interstate program is not reaching the diverse audience represented by the 4-H enrollment or general population statistics. Further research is needed to see if program in reaching a diverse audience across not only the state of Texas, but throughout the country.

The final implication relates to the overall experience of both hosting and traveling. While everyone in the Comal/Guadalupe and Travis County groups had hosted and traveled, only 4 of the 7 rural participants had done so. In order to garner a full appreciation of the 4-H interstate exchange program, it may be best to examine those who have both hosted and traveled. Those with both experiences are impacted more fully, rather than only having half of the experience. There is so much to be learned not only from traveling somewhere else, but by also joining with your family to host someone in your home.

APPENDIX A



Institutional Review Board

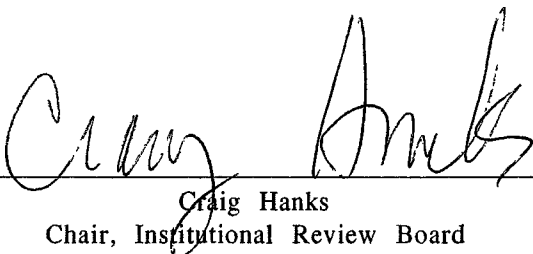
**Certification of
Review and Approval
by the
Southwest Texas State University
Institutional Review Board**

**IRB Reference Number
02-0290**

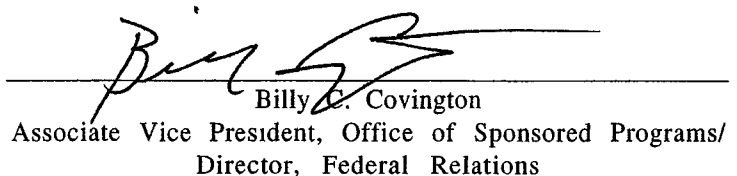
The project titled:

**Benefits of 4-H Interstate Exchange Program Participation
by Laura Petty under the supervision of John Beck
has been APPROVED-EXEMPT, effective 1/30/2003.**

The Southwest Texas Institutional Review Board shall conduct continuing review of this research appropriate to the degree of risk and the length of the project period, but not less than once per year.



Craig Hanks
Chair, Institutional Review Board



Billy C. Covington
Associate Vice President, Office of Sponsored Programs/
Director, Federal Relations

Southwest Texas State University

601 University Drive San Marcos, Texas 78666-4605
512-245-2414

SWT is a member of the Texas State University System.

APPENDIX B

204 Pecan Dr. NE
McQueeney, TX 78123
March 3, 2003

Dear :

Hello. My name is Laura Petty and I am a graduate student at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, pursuing a Master's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. I am also a County Extension Agent-4-H and Youth Development in Guadalupe County. In combining my school and work, I chose to do my thesis on the 4-H interstate exchange program. My research will examine the effects of exchange experiences on those who have participated within the last 10-15 years. Very little research has been done on the 4-H interstate exchange program, and I am asking for your help in changing that fact.

What I am asking you to do is complete a pen and paper questionnaire, which will be mailed to you within the next few weeks, pending your consent to participate. There are 30-40 items on the questionnaire related to you, your 4-H involvement, and your 4-H interstate exchange experiences. It should take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. Then, I will be contacting some of you for follow-up interviews to further explore your experiences.

The only risk involved with this study is the possibility that questions regarding some facets of your 4-H interstate exchange experiences may be considered sensitive. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report that might be published, no information will be provided that will make it possible to identify a subject.

Of course, participation in this project is completely voluntary, so you get to choose whether to participate or not. After you have read this letter and have chosen to participate, simply ***complete and return the attached consent form***. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records. You may also, at any time, withdraw from the study.

If any have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. I appreciate your assistance and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Laura J. Petty
830-560-1624 (hm), 830-305-4117 (cell),
830-379-2153 (wk), 830-372-3940 (fax)
204 Pecan Dr. NE, McQueeney, TX 78123
ljpetty@tamu.edu

4-H Interstate Exchange Research Project
Consent Form

I have read and understand the information you have provided about the 4-H interstate exchange research project. I have chosen to participate and I therefore, give my consent.

Signature _____ Date _____

To help in preparing for the study, please answer the following questions:

1. What year did you graduate high school?

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1982 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1983 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1984 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1985 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1986 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1987 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1988 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1989 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1990 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1991 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1992 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1993 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1994 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1995 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1996 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1997 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1998 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2001 |

2. What year(s) did you participate in 4-H interstate exchange? Check all that apply.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1978 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1979 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1980 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1981 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1982 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1983 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1984 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1985 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1986 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1987 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1988 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1989 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1990 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1991 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1992 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1993 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1994 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1995 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1996 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1997 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1998 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2001 |

3. During your interstate exchange experience, did you host? ☐ No ☐ Yes

4. During your interstate exchange experience, did you travel? ☐ No ☐ Yes

5. Would you be willing to allow me to contact you during the project? ☐ No ☐ Yes

If Yes, at what number can you be reached? _____

And when is the best time to call? _____

Please return this consent form in the enclosed envelop to **Laura Petty, 204 Pecan Dr. NE, McQueeney, TX 78123** or fax to **830-372-3940**. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Laura at 830-560-1624 (home), 830-379-2153 (work), or 830-305-4117 (cell).

You will also receive a copy of this signed form for your records.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, ATTENTION, AND SUPPORT!

APPENDIX C

204 Pecan Dr. NE
McQueeney, TX 78123
March 25, 2003

Dear :

Thanks so much for agreeing to participate in this study on the 4-H interstate exchange program. You are among a group of about 30 4-H alumni from Comal, Gillespie, Guadalupe, and Travis Counties who are contributing to this valuable research project. Your honest, candid responses will help shed light on 4-H interstate exchange, a topic of which little research currently exists.

Attached is the pen and paper questionnaire that you are being asked to complete. The items on the questionnaire are related to you, your 4-H involvement, and your 4-H interstate exchange experiences. It should take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. Once you have completed the questionnaire, simply mail it back to me in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. Then, I will be contacting some of you for follow-up interviews to further explore your experiences.

I have also included a copy of your consent form for your records. Participation is voluntary, and you may, at any time, withdraw from the study. All records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report that might be published, no information will be provided that will make it possible to identify a subject.

If any have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. I appreciate your assistance and look forward to hearing from you. I also look forward to sharing the results with you.

Sincerely,

Laura J. Petty
830-560-1624 (hm), 830-305-4117 (cell),
830-379-2153 (wk), 830-372-3940 (fax)
204 Pecan Dr. NE, McQueeney, TX 78123
ljpetty@tamu.edu

4-H INTERSTATE EXCHANGE PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire contains questions about you, your 4-H involvement, and your 4-H interstate exchange program experiences. Your responses are very important, so please be sure to respond completely to each question.

Tell us about yourself:

1. What year did you graduate high school?

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1982 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1983 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1984 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1985 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1986 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1987 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1988 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1989 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1990 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1991 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1992 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1993 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1994 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1995 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1996 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1997 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1998 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2001 |

2. What is your gender? ☐ Female ☐ Male

3. What is your ethnic background?

- ☐ African American ☐ American Indian ☐ Asian ☐ Hispanic ☐ White

4. What is your highest level of education?

- ☐ High school graduate
- ☐ Completed or currently pursuing Associate's degree
- ☐ Completed or currently pursuing Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Completed or currently pursuing Graduate degree
- ☐ Completed or currently attending Professional school (law, medical, etc.)

5. What is your occupation? _____

Tell us about your 4-H involvement:

6. What years were you in 4-H? Check all that apply.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1978 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1979 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1980 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1981 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1982 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1983 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1984 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1985 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1986 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1987 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1988 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1989 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1990 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1991 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1992 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1993 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1994 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1995 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1996 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1997 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1998 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2001 |

7. What were some of your 4-H projects? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Livestock projects (list) _____
- ☐ Food & nutrition project ☐ Shooting Sports project
- ☐ Clothing & textiles project ☐ Public speaking project
- ☐ Other projects (list) _____

8. What were some of your 4-H activities? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Recordbook ☐ Texas 4-H Roundup
- ☐ Texas 4-H Congress ☐ National 4-H Congress
- ☐ State Spectra ☐ District Leadership Lab
- ☐ Other activities (list) _____

9. Did you serve as an officer for your 4-H Club, County 4-H Council, District 4-H Council, or Texas 4-H Council? ☐ No ☐ Yes

If Yes, check all that apply and list years (1991-92, for example).

☐ Club _____ ☐ District Council _____
☐ County Council _____ ☐ Texas Council _____

Tell us about your 4-H interstate exchange program participation:

10. What years were you involved in 4-H interstate exchange? Check all that apply.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1978 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1979 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1980 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1981 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1982 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1983 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1984 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1985 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1986 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1987 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1988 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1989 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1990 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1991 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1992 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1993 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1994 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1995 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1996 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1997 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1998 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2001 |

Hosting Experience (If you did not host, please skip to question 21.)

11. While you were involved in 4-H interstate exchange, how many years did you host?

☐ 1 year ☐ 2 years ☐ 3 years ☐ 4 years ☐ 5 years ☐ 6+ years

12. During your time in the exchange program, from which counties/parishes and states were the 4-H members that you hosted?

13. Which hosting experience was most enjoyable to you and why?

14. Which was your least enjoyable and why?

If you hosted more than one year, please focus on just one of those host years in answering questions 15-20. If you hosted only one year, please focus on that experience.

15. The host year I will focus on is the year we hosted this county/parish and state:

16. How would you rate your hosting experience?

☐ 1 terrible ☐ 2 bad ☐ 3 neutral ☐ 4 good ☐ 5 excellent

Please explain.

17. How would you rate the similarities between you and your exchange (the person you hosted)?

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 we were very different | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 we were somewhat different | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 we were somewhat similar | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 we were very similar |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|

Please explain.

18. How would you rate the impact the hosting experience had on your family (parents, brothers and sisters, etc.).

☐ 1 no
impact

☐ 2 very
little impact

☐ 3 neutral

☐ 4 some
impact

☐ 5 major
impact

Please explain.

19. Describe one positive outcome your family experienced from hosting.

20. Describe one negative outcome your family experienced from hosting.

Travel (being hosted) Experience (If you did not travel, please skip to question 29.)

21. While you were involved in 4-H interstate exchange, how many years did you travel?

☐ 1 year

☐ 2 years

☐ 3 years

☐ 4 years

☐ 5 years

☐ 6+ years

22. During your time in the exchange program, to which counties/parishes and states did you travel?

23. What other areas did you visit or what sightseeing did you do while you were there?

24. Which trip was your most enjoyable and why?

25. Which trip was your least enjoyable and why?

If you traveled more than one year, please focus on just one of those travel years in answering questions 26-28. If you traveled only one year, please focus on that experience.

26. The travel year I will focus on is the year I traveled to and was hosted by this county/parish and state:

27. How would you rate your visit to this area?

☐ 1 terrible

☐ 2 bad

☐ 3 neutral

☐ 4 good

☐ 5 excellent

Please explain.

28. How would you rate the similarities between you and your host family?

☐ 1 we were
very
different

☐ 2 we were
somewhat
different

☐ 3 neutral

☐ 4 we were
somewhat
similar

☐ 5 we were
very similar

Please explain.

Summary/Wrap up

29. How would you rate your experience in the exchange program?

☐ 1 terrible ☐ 2 bad ☐ 3 fair ☐ 4 good ☐ 5 excellent

What experiences lead to the above rating? Please list those experiences.

30. Are you currently involved in the 4-H Interstate Exchange Program?

☐ No If no, do you plan to get involved in the future? ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ I don't know

☐ Yes If yes, what county? _____

31. Is your family currently involved in the 4-H program?

☐ No If no, do they plan to get involved in the future? ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ I don't know

☐ Yes If yes, what county? _____

32. Would you recommend the 4-H Interstate Exchange Program be continued?

☐ No ☐ Yes Why or why not?

33. Have you recommended the 4-H Interstate Exchange Program to younger siblings and/or friends? ☐ No ☐ Yes Why or why not?

34. Would you recommend the 4-H Interstate Exchange Program to your own children when they reach the appropriate age? ☐ No ☐ Yes Why or why not?

35. If there is anything else that would help us better understand your 4-H interstate exchange program experiences, please feel free to share that here.

36. May we call you to further discuss your responses? ☐ No ☐ Yes

If Yes, at what number can you be reached? _____,

and what is the best time to call you? _____

Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelop to Laura Petty, 204 Pecan Dr. NE, McQueeney, TX 78123 or fax to 830-372-3940. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Laura at 830-560-1624 (home), 830-379-2153 (work), or 830-305-4117 (cell).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, ATTENTION, AND SUPPORT.

APPENDIX D

Follow up interviews with Gillespie County Participants

C – Jane – 1992; Female; White

Highlight interstate exchange experience

We hosted both groups first before traveling there. It was kind of nice because you got to know them before you went and stayed in some stranger's home. I've always enjoyed doing it that way. It's a little weird otherwise. The very first exchange I did was with Anahuac (intrastate). We did some of the interesting things there, they were along the gulf coast.

Our out of state exchange was with Raton, New Mexico. I stayed with a girl in a very small town, which was not the main city. We toured several places. I think we might have seen a play. We did see the play Texas, I think on the way up there or on the way back, just as one of our county visits. There was a dance the last night that we got to do together. We had a good time. We got to see lots of things...a lot of things were quite a ways from them. For New Mexico, the drive was interesting, just going through it. I guess that was the neat thing. Even going to Anahuac, just being able to visit different parts of Texas, and then going to a different state that we'd never been to.

What was hosting experience like for you and your family?

Since I have a twin brother, we always got to host a male and a female at the same time, so we got to do both of those things and were able to participate better. It was interesting just seeing how they fit into our family. It was neat seeing how they reacted to what we thought might be interesting in Fredricksburg, what they liked, what they didn't like, what their interests were, what their hobbies were, and how different our families were. In New Mexico, my brother and I both fit in well with our families. She was an only child, so that was a little different coming from a family of 4. Their parents were really nice, always very welcoming, but just different eating habits, what they enjoyed. It's always a little bit different whenever you're staying with someone else. You're never quite sure what they're going to serve you. For my parents, it was just one more person, like a friend over for a week. It wasn't any extra hardship or anything. Of course they were probably glad when both of us were gone to New Mexico. It wasn't any big difficulty. I think they enjoyed doing it. We had hosted some German exchange students

for a month at a time, so a week at a time wasn't a big deal trying to get people back and forth.

Comments you think your parents would have about the 4-H IEP

They would probably just say it was a valuable thing that we were able to see different cultures and sights within Texas and outside of Texas, opening the doors to us to different opportunities that are out there.

Any challenges?

Don't throw fireworks at a police car (brother). It was easy to lose contact because we didn't have the e-mail back then, which would have made it a little bit easier. You try to keep in contact, but it's hard to be in contact so you kind of lose that connection and it's something that we've done, but you don't know how that's affected them or keeping up with them. There's the challenge of keeping up a relationship with something you did in 4-H and all of a sudden it's just gone and done.

Travel highlights?

Focused on New Mexico. It was a longer travel, got to see things along the way. Driving through New Mexico, you drove from totally flat to wonderful hills, right on the border of Colorado. You're just driving into wonderful scenery, a different climate, different atmosphere, which was pretty neat.

Staying in someone else's home?

It was fine. You're kind of nervous, not quite sure what to expect, what their rooms, their houses are like. They made me feel very welcome and they tried to do whatever they could to accommodate you. And I guess that's your biggest fear is are you going to get along, are you not. That's the nice thing when they host second, you always have the opportunity to back out if something's not working out. That's the advantage to hosting first.

Not like sending you down the street to best buddy's house?

Hosting first...I don't know if my parents would have allowed us to just go stay with a stranger. They hosted...they'd had this person in their house, they knew...you can read someone pretty well after hosting them for a week, what kind of family life, language, how they act. You feel safe...you're spending the night in a house, but during the whole week, you're with all the other kids and chaperones. You're doing the activities together.

If there was a problem, you knew you could contact the chaperones. There's a security, you're not just sending them off by themselves. It's with a group.

Did exchanges during freshman, sophomore, junior years

It was neat doing both the in state and out of state exchanges. Texas is so big, every part is different atmosphere, climate, types of people, races. You get a very broad sense of what Texas is all about. I think that was a wonderful experience. I had never been to the coast, seen their agriculture products, their touristy things. I haven't gotten to tour north, west, etc. You don't just go visit that. You don't get to see the nitty-gritty stuff that you do being there and living with someone for a week.

Would you have done this without 4-H interstate exchange?

No. I wouldn't have been allowed to go by myself. I wasn't by myself, I was with a group, but it was 4-H related. You knew that there was going to be something responsible in that whole program. 4-H was promoting it, it was going to be a good program. It was reasonable cost because you are staying with somebody else. Any income level can participate. That's the advantage...you're not needing this whole big chunk of change to be able to travel there.

4-H program in other state?

They were more into woodworking, aquatic science, and arts and crafts. It wasn't just the beef, swine, etc. There were different projects that they were more active in those areas, which was a little unique.

D – Debra – 1988; Female; White

Highlights

I think we traveled first. We took vans and it took forever to get there. We all knew each other. We spent the night in Tennessee. We stayed at the National 4-H Center one night. My exchangee was an only child, and I was oldest of three girls. She lived in town and I lived in the country. We got together in groups, went out to eat, go visit things. We hosted a different girl than the one I had stayed with. She was underprivileged. We took them to San Antonio and the riverwalk.

Hosting experience

I think we met her when we went up there. It wasn't that big of a deal because she was a girl and I had two sisters, so just one more person. We were use to sharing. She was closer to my sisters' ages, and hung out with them

Comments you think your parents would have about the 4-H interstate exchange program?

I think they thought it was a good idea. They liked it. My parents are real friendly, real welcoming and warm. They would probably take kids right now. They enjoyed showing what they have, teaching. We lived out in the country on a farm. They enjoyed showing people experiences that they've never seen before. They really liked it, I think.

Traveling

It was different. I don't know if I had stayed with other people that I didn't know before. There was another Texas girl in the same house. I wasn't totally by myself with the host family. I had someone that I knew with me, which probably made it a little bit easier. I made good friends with her and we wrote back and forth for a few years. We kind of lost touch.

Any challenges?

Can't name any.

Did you notice any similarities/differences in the 4-H programs – projects the other 4-H'ers did, etc.?

We did more ag like livestock. They did more home...sewing, cooking things instead of animals.

Other comments?

We did lots of fundraisers. I still have pictures that I pull out every once in a while.

F – Tim – 1997; Male; White

Highlights some of your exchange experiences

Been to Tennessee and New Mexico and have hosted people from both of those places.

Hosting experience

New Mexico was Raton. Both cities really matched up pretty well with Fredricksburg.

We had a lot of similarities in towns so it was kind of easy to keep people. We basically

were tour guides since Fredricksburg has a lot to do. We definitely had a good time and it was fun to take them to stuff in Texas because it's still a little different even though it's not too far of a jump across states.

What was it like having someone you didn't know very well staying in your home?

No big deal. I guess I kind of grew up being use to it. Pretty much all the time we had people staying. It wasn't anything unusual.

What was it like for your parents?

Probably same kind of deal...they were very use to it. We also had exchange students from Germany stay in our house before. Tennessee and New Mexico was not near the stretch in language barrier.

Any challenges with having someone stay with you?

I guess, not really too many challenges. It wasn't just the easiest thing.

Traveling experiences and staying in someone else's home?

Definitely interesting, but I don't think it was any sort of a stretch by any means. They paired us up real well. It was a really organized deal where most of the people that got picked kind of had similar families and backgrounds.

Any challenges there?

I'm sure there could be some. It wasn't any big deal.

Any general impressions of anything that you would encourage others groups to do differently?

As far as improving it, it's kind of tough. The length of stay is always...I think the longer you can stay, the better, but it's such a time crunch on everybody especially adults, that it just gets hard to do. I think ours were even a full week from what I remember, so that was a pretty big stretch for anybody.

What were some of the things you did when you visited the other states?

The usual. In Tennessee, we were right outside of Nashville so we toured that. It was a lot of sight seeing and checking everything out. In New Mexico, we were in Raton. A lot of similar stuff; there's just not as much to do there. In both cities, we did do a lot of just normal, day to day stuff because the parents were still working during that week.

Did you do a lot of group activities or more with your host families?

It was primarily group, at least in the evenings, but then usually during the day, it was about 50-50 group and then on your own—mainly more organized though. Day to day stuff, we would just go feed the cows and go hang out.

Did you notice any similarities or differences in 4-H projects and activities?

It was actually kind of similar. Everybody did goats, cows, so it was kind of similar to down here. I don't remember it being particularly any different.

Any recommendations?

I think up-front pairing is probably the key part to making it work well. And I think that's why mine worked so well...because up-front I had good people both times. I really got along with them well and we kind of matched. I know that's tough to do just because...unless you can do a little questionnaire or something like that to try to pair people, so it's kind of tricky. Any unique way you could figure out or better way to do that, I think it would help out a lot.

Follow up interviews with Comal/Guadalupe County Participants

F – Lori – 2000; Female; White

Highlight your interstate exchange experiences.

We hosted a group from Washington State. They were from Angeles Port, and they were mostly a horse kind of group—most of them had horses. I don't remember how big the group was, but they all came down, and my two sisters and I had a girl stay with us. She came down and we spent the week just basically showing them around San Antonio and our area here. We went to the state capitol, just kind of showing them more about how our 4-H experience in Texas, especially our family's experience, kind of worked. Like I said, we don't do horses, we do cattle and all sorts of other stuff, so it was different for her to see those things because we weren't primarily doing horse projects. We did offer more leadership and things like that than I think what she was use to. We were more involved, and we were more involved in our school activities than I think she was too, so it was kind of neat for her to see our lifestyle around here, not just our 4-H experience. And, we got to know the rest of the group really well, and so that was kind of neat to like a whole group of people, not just that one person. You know you could spend time with

that person in your home, but you do get to see how everybody else is interacting and different personalities from different parts of the nation. I mean it was weird you could tell which one was the Washington group; our lifestyles were so different. They live on a coastline, so they were use to different things. So we spent the week just kind of showing them around Texas and doing things like that. We actually had pretty good weather compared to other exchanges. We were able to do everything we wanted to do. I just got home from my college orientation actually and missed the first part of the week, but came in at the end of it when we were hosting her and picked up like nothing else. They were just so friendly and it was easy to go and not worry about how I didn't meet them and not being there for the first few days.

When we went to Washington, it was a long flight. We got to Washington, and as soon as you stepped off the plane, no humidity. It was 70 degrees in July compared to our summers of 100 something. We were all wearing jackets and sweatshirts each day because it was so cool to us up there, and they were laughing at us because we weren't use to it. We were in the middle of a national forest—the whole state was. I didn't learn as much about their 4-H program when I went, and that's something that I wish I would have paid more attention to. We went horseback riding with Amanda and stuff and did that sort of thing, but we didn't go into all that they do within their 4-H program, but to see their lifestyle and her family atmosphere and that sort of stuff. Like I said, we went horseback riding, and we went to Canada one day, which was the neatest thing. I'd never been out of the country, not even to Mexico. So going to Canada, that was really neat, and taking the ferry and being on the coastline, seeing the west coast was kind of neat. I ate types of fish that I had never eaten before. The most fish I've eaten was catfish. Like I said I guess, after a year later, after them coming here seeing how lives had even changed by then, different things that had gone on...we kept in contact, but there were still different things; her parents after she met mine, and that sort of stuff. I think it was good that my sisters and I stayed together, especially their first year, they were a little bit more comfortable being a little younger at a strange place since I was there. I had never been before since I was older, but I know this year they enjoyed it even more.

What was the hosting experience like for you and your family?

Our family is pretty outgoing. We—being from a family of 4 and especially three girls, we have people stay over all the time, but having somebody live with us...you're explaining everything to them because they've never been there before, they don't know us, like oh yeah, mom and dad fight, or little things...oh that's our brother, don't pay any attention to him...different things like that. We just explained a lot more while she was here. It gives you a chance when they come down, it's almost like showing off your lifestyle. Even if you don't think it's that great or whatever, it's just something new to them. We all enjoy living where we live, so that's why I think the girls and I had a good time with Amanda because we were like, oh you want to go do this, oh you want to meet my friend. We were introducing her to our friends from high school like our little show and tell type person because we wanted to give her the full experience. I remember going into Seguin one day to pick up something for mom, and driving her through Seguin, she probably was bored. I'm like a tour guide...and this is our courthouse, fairgrounds, etc. The horse club was actually having some practice, so I stopped by and we talked to them and they kind of explained a little bit about horse shows and horse events down here, compared to things that she was used to, so they could relate to her a little bit more than I could on the 4-H level and their projects. Just showing her around the area was kind of neat because you see someone who's never been here before and their reaction, and I guess you makes you kind of go, oh yeah I guess that fireplace is kind of cool. And I guess the way our family changed, I guess just the friendships you gain out of it. We had such a good experience that we wanted to do it again.

What comment might your parents make about the program?

I don't know if my parents would do a school exchange for a whole semester or year, just because we're so active. I think they enjoyed it. My parents are pretty outgoing, people-people, so I think that they enjoyed it, and one of the reasons they wanted to do it again, and they enjoyed making new friendships and meeting new people, my dad listening to the hunting and fishing. He could even relate to some of the things around that area that he was interested in that Amanda could talk to him about.

Identify any challenges within the program.

Travel – Going there for nine days in a place you’ve never been before is a long time. People love to vacation, but when you’re staying with someone else, and you’re dependent on them, nine days is a long time. It may not be as long in hotel because you don’t feel like a burden.

There were some personalities that didn’t really get along between host and exchangees. There had been family changes in the year between hosting and traveling. There needs to be something to analyze, check on any family changes during the year between hosting and traveling. There is also a need for analyzing the personalities in the group a little bit more.

What did you learn about the 4-H program in the other state?

4-H is not necessarily agriculture; their industry was different (forestry, fishing). We were expecting to see their animals. They did more community service, we did more leadership. We did different things; most of them had horses; we didn’t see a lot of farms or crops like we were use to. They had limited space, small pastures, had rabbits and horses.

Any suggestions for future exchanges?

By doing the video interviews, you’re better able to match those within the groups. Personalities could have been matched up better if we’d done the video. Also need matching up sizes of the groups a little better. A notice of what we’d be responsible for (how much money to take, etc.). Exchange program has such benefits compared to...traveling.

B – Sally – 1999; Female; White

Highlight your interstate exchange experiences.

Most of the stuff was together as a group – Alamo, Schlitterbahn, etc. First meeting, it took a little longer to get to know one another. When we went up there, we all knew each other so it was more relaxed. We did a lot of the history stuff up there. It was fun. I still occasionally talk to my exchange student.

What was the hosting experience like for you and your family?

See a different point of view, learning their culture, they helped with chores. Financially – it had an impact, but it didn't keep us from doing it; would have been nice to have done more fundraising.

What comment might your parents make about the program?

They really liked it and they enjoyed visiting with them, seeing differences in 4-H programs.

What was it like to stay in someone else's home when you traveled?

At first, it was kind of weird. It was a completely different environment. All the bedroom doors were closed, ours are completely open. It was just weird for me. My mom cooks, but we had one or two meals at that house. My dad farms and my mom works in town. His dad delivered vending machines and mom sold insurance. Going to a guy's house, that was weird, but it was nothing. We exchanged gifts, and I got some really neat stuff. At first, you ask questions (like where things are at), but by the time it's over, they're like make yourself at home. Being at a stranger's house, the first night is weird. Overall, they were really friendly.

Identify any challenges within the program.

We had different interests, but we had enough alike. I'm impressed with how well we were paired up. Adults traveling.

What did you learn about the 4-H program in other state?

Went to their 4-H camp facilities, not a state center like what we have in Texas—more of a regional type facility. My exchange partner was more into horses. Their fairs are at different times of year. I don't remember us talking about the traditional projects.

Any suggestions for future exchanges?

The exchange students from Ohio kept a journal, and I wish I would have done that.

Something to encourage future exchangeees to do, and could be used to raise funds.

Recordkeeping system of who has participating and impact made.

C – Rick – 1997; Male; White

Highlight your interstate exchange experiences.

Really enjoyed traveling, seeing a different part of the country and having someone there who's familiar with that part of the country who's interested in the same things...generally interested in the same things that we were interested in was a unique opportunity in itself. It was also really good to meet someone from a different part of the country and really get to know them as well. Getting to meet people from a different part of the country and getting to see where they lived. We were still in the same culture, but at the same time, a different shade of the family.

What was the hosting experience like for you and your family?

It puts everyone on their best behavior.

What comment might your parents make about the program?

I think they would comment positively. My exchangee was really into horses, which she got off good with dad. Other exchangee had some emotional problems.

What was it like to stay in someone else's home when you traveled?

I seriously think that is one of the most unique experiences I've ever had. It's totally different that you don't have the opportunity to do.

Identify any challenges within the program.

They should try to match up boys with boys and girls with girls.

What did you learn about the 4-H program in the other state?

No glaring differences. We spent most of our time with the exchange group, so to base a judgement about the 4-H program on that experience alone wouldn't be right.

Other comments?

It was a really good experience. It was really unique to basically be a part of someone else's family for a week and get to see a different part of the country. It was definitely...I definitely have a positive...I view it in a positive light...it was a good experience.

G - Michelle – 1990; Female; White and J – Karen – 1987; Female; White

Highlight your interstate exchange experiences.

G - Michelle – Kentucky & Georgia

J – Karen - Tennessee & California

What was the hosting experience like for you and your family?

J - Karen – Tennessee was great experience. We all had similar backgrounds & we meshed really well with them. Not just having them in your house, but having a whole week to do fun things with a lot of your friends. What sticks out in my mind about exchange is that I got to take some really fun trips with my best friends. The group of people I was friends with then is still my group of friends now. We look back at those trips as just being such fun times because literally I went on vacation with my best friends. It was neat to hear how they lived, things they were involved in. It was a week long of doing all these fun things with your new friends and your best friends from home.

G – Michelle – It was like being on vacation, but doing it at home. I learned a lot about Extension and 4-H in those other states and how 4-H is organized. Girls that stayed with them were on their equivalent to our state council, so we thought they were cream of the crop 4-H'ers. Kentucky - from similar rural areas, meshed really well.

J - Karen – California group was quite different. One guy who wasn't all that outstanding showed up at National Congress that year. It gives you a different perspective about 4-H in other states. Someone like that from Texas would never have been selected to go to Congress.

G - Michelle – Another advantage of exchange: I knew the people in exchange, but they became my best friends because we had to do so much together to go on that trip. It wasn't just the week we spent on the exchange, it was everything we did leading up to that (fundraisers, rodeo, etc.). We became good friends and we did other 4-H things together.

Having someone stay in your home

Both said they were very positive experiences

J - Karen – Mom to this day communicates with lady that stayed with us; into the week, we felt very comfortable

G - Michelle – It gives you such an opportunity to see people from another place and you just realize that people are all the same. It makes you feel more worldly even though they're just from Kentucky, etc. You just see that people are the same everywhere, and that to me is one of the most important things of the exchange program because that's to me what the objective of it is.

Both compared their 4-H exchange hosting experience with that of hosting German exchange students; international exchangeees were a little wilder, given more reign, may be typical of Europeans-they have more freedom there

J - Karen – It gives some kids the opportunity to see a part of the US that they would never get to go to otherwise.

Would you have gone to these places if it hadn't been for the 4-H interstate exchange program?

No. I never would have seen the things.

G - Michelle – I would never have gone to Versailles, Kentucky.

J - Karen – Overall, it gives people the chance to see the workings, the community, people, etc., not just a tourist. See how they live, where they work. It's a different kind of experience. Those groups got to see some of the same things when we hosted them.

G – Michelle – group from another state did skit about their state and 4-H in their state
What was it like to stay in someone else's home when you traveled?

G - Michelle – It makes you more self-reliant, my mom's not here, so I need to take care of things and not spend too much money. And then of course, just adjusting to that family, their habits, and the bed you have to sleep on.

J - Karen – Had a good and a bad experience. Me and my exchangee from Tennessee got along great. Going to California, we were not alike, families were different. Saving grace was that someone else there from Texas. Group activities help to limit time with family. My mom made sure we ate 3 square meals a day. The family in California never ate routinely. I was use to having breakfast. It just shows you how different families are. It opens your eyes.

G - Michelle – It makes you appreciate what you have at home.

Identify any challenges within the program.

G – Michelle– matching personalities; raising funds; justifying why you're raising money; how busy kids are; kids have so much going on, summer is limited; kids have to make choices between activities

J - Karen – might be reluctant interest because of 9/11

G - Michelle – 4-H helps you learn coping skills. You are thrown into a situation, for lack of a better word, with, ok here's your family, now you're staying there for a

week...deal with it. That's a lot like a real job because you're thrown into a situation where you have to cope. Learning the way people live.

J - Karen – Best case scenario is when kids are matched up by similar likes and dislikes. It makes it a lot harder and less likely for you to have a good experience if you're not able to relate to that person.

G - Michelle – All of my trips helped prepared me for living on my own when I went to college. When it was time for me to go to college, it was honestly no big deal.

J - Karen – 4-H teaches you to get by. Teaches you how to be more independent.

G - Michelle – experiences in Kentucky because we were part of 4-H exchange; went to horse park, stud farms, saw triple crown winner, stud fees of \$10,000; tourists would not have such opportunities.

Follow up interviews with Travis County Participants

B – Ben – 1996; Male; White

Highlight your exchange experiences

Idaho – We rode a train. Real good experience—seemed like everyone got along well together. We went camping, did boat rides, ate game animals, and visited some museums. A bad thing that happened was that one of the guys stole something from a store and he was ban from 4-H exchange. The highlights included a dance and big game cookout. We did a train ride to and from Idaho. We all got really close knit.

Ohio – Football Hall of Fame; more bland or laid back; saw power plants; really not as well connected as with Idaho and Oregon) some new people involved in exchange leadership

Oregon – Went to water reserve, met famous baseball player, and participated (shot off) fireworks for entire town. Really enjoyed getting to interact with other cultures of people. Every town has its own culture, especially being there during 4th of July. Being a part of a different culture when the culture comes together was special and unique. Learned a little about open range, Indian heritage, Oregon Trail, and got to see different geographical locations that were unique to that region of the country. Don't really have anything bad to say.

What was hosting experience like for you and your family?

This was a real bonding experience for me. My first exchangee, we got really close and we had a really good time together. I was younger (14 or 15) and open to new things. We bonded well on both exchanges. Had no problems with him. Did fishing, capitol, Six Flags, different places in Texas (coast, Schlitterbahn, Six Flags). Being able to host someone like that, how to learn to be a good house guest, you learn what things you liked about that person and what you didn't like, whether it was leaving clothes or towels around or messing up something, it really taught you how to be a good house guest, how to take care of your own stuff because you have somebody in your home. You really take note of how they handle themselves. That was beneficial to me.

What comment might your parents make about the exchange program?

I think my mother would say it was a lot of fun. I can see where a parent would be like 'that was really was a pain in the neck for a week.' Also can see how parents are real receptive to having them living in their home and providing them a nice vacation or trip away from home. Cultural experience.

What was it like staying in someone else's home?

It really made me feel thankful for where I'm from and made me feel well received as far away as Idaho and Oregon. There were other people out there like myself that you can connect with through 4-H. I think the experience staying in someone else's home makes you aware of what kind of person you are. I think it's a culture thing, it really is learning someone else's culture. That's what I think I gained most from.

Any similarities or differences in 4-H program in other state?

I would like to comment better on that. I'm sure they're a lot similar and a lot different. We didn't get too in depth with projects. I didn't stay out on the farm all the time. Some of my people did more of the house projects. We didn't get too involved with that, knowing how similar or different those were.

What would you say were some of the challenges or suggestions you have for the future?

I think more group activities, getting everyone involved. I would definitely stress that. There's too much, on a couple of our exchange trips, that weren't all inclusive, everyone included. On our first trip, everyone did everything together (dance, river boat, camping, etc.). Time with your family was special because most of the activities were done together. Other two exchanges, it was a rarity to get together—whether it was at Cedar

Point or going through the plants. Those just weren't bonding experiences for me. Always like to see more recreational activities, gathering at home. We had (Ohio) a progressive dinner. It really worked out well. At the end we did activities like Ag Olympics that were really fun.

G – Cori – 1993; Female; White

Highlight your exchange experiences.

Hardest thing is to remember exactly and keep them all straight. How it brought us closer together as a county for sure. A lot of the people I did exchange with are still my best friends. Good to get to see different parts of the country and it's always better to have a host to show you around instead of just being somewhere on your own, trying to figure out what there's to do. It was good to get to go to LBJ Library, Schlitterbahn, Sea World, so it was good because a lot of times, things in your own backyard that you don't pay attention to because they're just always there and you don't take the time to go and see and do and learn what 's in your own area too. Learning about forestry, different plants, how all that works, that was interesting, whether it's agriculture or whatever, it's always different. Different parts of the country have different focuses, different things they're good at. As far as travel, the way people live. One exchange girl had a horse who had the best of everything and the house wasn't. I wondered why they didn't put some of that effort into cleaning up after yourself. Makes you realize that different people live all sorts of ways.

What was the hosting experience like for you and your family?

Affects whole family. A lot of it had to do with transportation issues especially when we were underage to drive or if the parents of kids staying with you had a problem with them riding with teens. Put a lot of strain on your parents to get you different places. Hectic schedules of trying to have things to do to entertain. Whether you watch something different on tv or you don't talk about personal family issues because you've got company around all the time. Also good because the whole week with ours, the whole family gets to learn about that person, where they're from. Saw different people in general and how they have different interests, some people liked scenery; one girl liked

looking at her book when we were driving around town instead of paying attention to anything going on.

Describe some of the challenges of exchange?

Bratty sister comment from questionnaire – that's the big challenge, being able to pair ones who are closer to the same age. Learn from all experiences, no matter what, something good to do. Hosting more than 1 person, trying to come up with what does everyone in the group want to do because everyone's got their own opinions.

Financially, it causes challenges because some people are more willing and have more money to go out and do more of the high-faluting events versus some people not wanting to go anywhere or spend any money. Goes through the whole thing, like whether your host family serves you beans and rice. If you're not seeing eye to eye on what you want to do or how you want to be treated. I don't want it to sound like there's this that can wrong and that can go wrong because I totally did love the program, and I would totally, if I ever have kids, try to get them involved because I think it's good. You have all these teamwork projects in school, and it's like hands-on, real life, week long project like that. It's something you're going to help you and you're going to learn from it. Growing up, since my parents had a farm, we never really got to take family vacations together, so it kind of provided me with a good outlet to go exploring the country, which I never would have been able to do otherwise.

What was it like staying in someone else's home?

It's good and important to be respectful and accommodating, to help out, like doing the dishes. Really you're going to be a part of the family for a whole week, not just a person to be waited on hand and foot for the week. It's important too for you to get to know their family because you'll have to deal with their brothers and sisters just the way they do.

Do you recall any similarities or differences between the 4-H programs here and there?

As far as raising the animals and doing things like that, everything seemed pretty similar. I felt fortunate to participate in many local state activities (camp, Congress, etc.), and I didn't really feel like I was missing out on anything.

Additional comments?

I just hope that different counties keep doing it because even though you always say that this could have done this to make it better. I think it's good just to have the opportunity and to get kids to go on a trip during the summer rather than sitting at home watching tv or whatever else they might do in the interim. We also got stuck in Chicago when we missed some connections for our train.

A – Carol – 1999; Female; White

Highlight your exchange experiences.

1st – Ohio – I wasn't old enough when they came down. Kids from Ohio came here and then we traveled to Ohio the next summer. When they came down, it easy to get along with the girls, but then it wasn't. We had a lot of fun. They learned a lot of things about how we live down here and farming. When I went there, one thing that was really neat, the girl that I was staying with, she and I were in a newspaper – they did a clip. Ohio – it was ok, first time we'd ever done it.

2nd – Oregon – It was awesome. When they came down, we had a blast with them. The girls had never been to the Gulf of Mexico, so we took them down there. They were use to their coast. They thought the water would be cold. When we went up there, we had an awesome time. I went bare-back riding up the side of a mountain, new experiences. Learned how to walk around barrels for barrel racing and drive cattle. It was the best experience I'd ever had. It made me grow a lot. Learned how they raise their animals and what kind of qualifications their animals had to have for their shows because they are completely different from ours (weights, raising in different way, spending so many hours, etc.).

As far as their 4-H program, what similarities or differences do you remember?

The differences between all of them really from Texas is that we actually have scheduled meetings. We actually have series that we go through (secretary's report, treasurer's report). They don't do it that way. One person in the club did it all. Don't have elected people -- that was one thing that was really different, usually a senior of the group that did all of the reporting on everything. I like the team effort and it wasn't like that there. As

far as similarities, we both have a group where you go and meet new people, and get to do all the fun stuff and do projects.

What was it that made certain trips better than others?

Age difference – the girls from Oregon were closer to my age. Ohio – they were a lot older. They were more hoity-toity. Oregon – were into same things, same likes, dislikes, found it easier to get along with them.

What was the hosting experience like for you and your family?

Hosting was difficult at first because you do have new people coming into your home. Then again, it was good because they got to see how our family lived, our daily chores, how our family worked.

What comment might your parents make about the 4-H exchange program?

They love it. They love opening their home to people. That's one of their favorite things to do. No negative, nothing.

What was it like traveling and staying in someone else's home?

That was different because whenever I went, I hadn't ever really stayed with a family that I didn't really know. I knew the student that came down. It was completely different (than going down to your best buddy's house). For the first little bit, I was nervous and kind of uncomfortable. Even though I'd already met the person, they had come down the summer before, it was still kind of awkward. Overall, the families were very nice that I stayed with. They made me feel very at home. I could say that I grew just knowing how they live their lives, about Oregon, how they work, what time they got up and starting working on their stuff—completely different from what we do here. All together, very amazing.

What would you say were the challenges or suggestions you'd have for future exchanges?

Honesty, I don't know of...I mean, like I said, all the experiences were different. My first one was a little awkward because of the age difference, but really the only thing negative about it. Every experience that the...sponsors that went with us were very good. We never had a problem with housing or with the kids that were with us here and there. We all...everything went as planned and didn't have any difficulties doing anything,

which I thought was really good considering the size our group. Overall, I would say that there's honesty nothing that needs to be changed from my perspective.

Anything else?

Honestly, I don't know. Just that it's an amazing experience and I would recommend it to anybody.

I – Anne – 2001; Female; White

Highlight your exchange experiences.

Hosting - I guess hosting is where you show the students what's around your town. Of course it seems like you have to hit the historical sites like the capitol and LBJ library.

With that, you feel obligated so they can learn more and more about Texas itself.

Personally, we'd always like to take them out and show them the crop land, the more agricultural side of Texas.

Traveling – It was kind of the same thing. Some families would have a set plan and know exactly where they wanted to take you and where the good spots are, good scenic pictures. When I was younger, the capitols just didn't do it for me. I understand the historical meaning and I can kind of see the differences in them. We had gone through Austin capitol about 10 times, that just kind of burns you out of all capitols. They're all a little different, but for the most part, they're still a capitol.

We got to meet like...to see how...living with another family, you got to see exactly how they live, that they weren't hillbillies. I'm sure they had the same impression of Texas as a bunch of cowboys.

What was the hosting experience like for you and your family?

I was young when [my older sister] starting hosting (I was probably 9), so I was use to it. It really wasn't that big of a deal. Me and my sister always shared a room, so sharing it with another person or just having to share with my brothers so they'd have room, it really wasn't a big deal. It was just kind of like having an extra person there. You just want to show them the best time you can. It was a good reason to have good food and always go somewhere, always have something to do.

What was it like staying in someone else's home?

It's hard to believe that you're going to go live with this family for a week and depending on them for everything. It was kind of to be expected. It makes it easier when you host first because you don't feel so bad about asking for things, making yourself at home more so. It's always hardest at first you interact with this person, whether you're hosting or traveling.

Comment your parents might make?

Mom (can't make out comment) oh yeah, it was great.

She and her brother also did 3-week exchanges with German students.

What similarities or differences did you see between the 4-H programs here and there?

We discussed it, but nothing sticks out in my mind. Kentucky – parent showed me tobacco operation, how they harvested, dried it, etc. That was really neat. Sent me home with some stalks of it. For the most part, it was really similar, projects and everything. Seems like they raised some sort of animal that was a little bit different than what we do here.

Anything else?

It was just really neat to like...especially when we exchanged with a state that had something special. In Pennsylvania, we went to the Liberty Bell. That was a really neat thing, just to have the experience to go there...because that's something you hear about you don't always get to see.

Do you think, if it wasn't for the 4-H interstate exchange program, you would have had the opportunity to go and see these places and do the things you did?

No. We can't drive to Kentucky randomly and go to Churchill Downs. When you go on vacation, you just get to see the surface. You don't get to learn where the best spots to eat, roads to take.

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