PEER AWARDS

This recommendation is for a team of co-leaders who are amazing. Our group had 41 members with diverse interests. Without a team of leaders, our group meetings would not be possible. The co-leaders consistently jumped in and helped in all areas. Not a single one refused to help when asked. Often they were asking “How can I help” and “What can I do.” They faithfully worked throughout the year even when their own lives were busy.

Elizabeth Boolukos volunteered to teach Home Ec. Unfortunately with the play taking up much of the schedule we did not have room for a home EC class this year. But we did have a need for a backdrop expert to lead the members in making the scenes for the play. Although it was not what she planned, she said “yes” she would take on the job. She worked magic with her group, transforming pieces of muslin into 7 different backdrops. She taught them how to draw on large scale and how to see a scene in their mind. She taught kids how to bring a painting alive. She encouraged them when things did not go the way they wanted them to. She guided the teen on the project and helped her think though the job the teen was assigned. Elizabeth was always there to help.

Tara Twomey-Mulvey took a group of youth who most of had no theater experience and not only taught them acting skills but taught them they could achieve great things with hard work. She started out meeting with them twice a month, but soon realized that they needed a lot more time. She gave hours of her free time to work with youth to help them become their characters. She was endlessly positive. She constantly told them they were capable and got youth who might not have thought of them selves as actresses to see themselves as actresses. She took a group of JR high boys and Cloverbuds and taught them to two English country dances and got the boys to enjoy doing them. She sewed and collected costumes so that the girls would look authentic. The project was a 4H play; yet she treated it as a professional performance. Besides the skill leadership, she nurtured the potential in each each youth. She found ways to use every member that said “I want to be in the play.” On the day of the performance, 30 of the 41 members of the club had some involvement with the play. She encouraged the discouraged and gave a vision of capability to the doubters. She went way above and beyond the expectations of a 4H leader.

Suzanne Spronk was the assistant play director. She kept everyone involved with the play on track. She led the practices when the director could not be there. She raised the bar for expectations. One of the older members of the play she told me how much it meant to her to have Mrs. Spronk work with them. She said that Mrs. Spronk pushed her to do more than she thought she was capable. The young teen really appreciated this because she learned that in fact she could do more than she thought. Having the expectations bar set higher challenged her to grow. All the time Suzanne was setting the bar higher, she encouraged the youth. She worked with them and guided them.

Three leaders would say they did not do much this year: Liz Yourdon, Jennifer Smith, and Lisa Caiito. But they are wrong. They did way more than they realized. All three helped with the Exploring Your World class (Cloverbuds/Young JRS). For each class, they jumped in and willingly helped wherever needed. Many of the classes involved small group activities. Each lead a small group of youth. They assisted youth when they were struggling with an aspect of the project. They saw needs and met them without asking “what should I do?”--they just did what was needed to be done. Lisa also arranged the logics of the robotics team and Liz
organized the fund-raising. Liz and Jen looked over lesson plans and provided comments and feedback.

Ronwyn Kneller lead the non-competition robotics group and the boys horsebowl/hippology team. As always, Ronwyn took her job very seriously. Without any horse background, she lead a study group. One boy reported he learned more from her than any other time in the horse program. She supervised the robotics learning group, a group of youth that wanted to learn robotics but did not want to be on a competitive team. She filled-in in various roles whenever asked even on the spur-of-the-moment.

Marlene Kyle supervised the BioAsuable project and provided the organization for the group. Each meeting, she made sure the team was on task and was focused. She had a hard job as her group was the smallest but had a large task. She guided the research on grants, making sure that the on-line research was focused on the project.

Tammy Neureuther co-lead the robotics team and supervised their activities during the 4H time period. She opened her home to the robotics team to house their competition board and mat for what was supposed to be a couple of months that ultimately became most of the 4H year. When it became important for more play practices, she opened her home to the theater group to use her living room while the robotics team was in the basement. She consistently helped the team with logistics. She brought insight into issues when the team was in a deadlock. She encouraged the group to keep working when they did not feel like working.

While she was not a Chattering Chipmunk Leader, we need to recognize Jordy who taught the nutrition class. She was phenomenal with the youth. She listened to our needs and came prepared each week with a learning activity that had a hands-on component—like physically measuring the amount of sugar in beverages or adding Crisco to buns to represent he amount of fat in fast food meals. While this is part of her curriculum, she really got the kids engaged in their learning. Then after the learning bit, Jody taught them to prepare, cook and bake. She had them laughing and working together as they learned. All the members reported they liked the classes.