

**Story Title** Franklin County 4H Youth Explore Wonders of Washington (WOW)

**Program** Franklin - 4-H Youth Development

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**Is this related to an  
Equal  
Program/Employment  
Opportunity?**

Yes

**Executive Summary** The National 4H Conference Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland, offers many educational opportunities for youth to explore and learn about themselves and others while away from home. The Wonders of Washington also known as WOW is one such once in a lifetime program that youth from Franklin County were able to enjoy.

**Issues/Needs and  
Audiences** According to the website (<http://nyscommunityaction.org/about-community-action/>) the New York State Community Action Association is a federally designated organization that is the frontline resource for identifying people living in poverty. In their County by County poverty report, Franklin County ranks 3rd in the highest percentage of population of people living in poverty in NYS.

In an Afterschool Alert Issue Brief ([www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)) and according to Save the Children – Examining Child Poverty in Rural America that “partly due to structural conditions -- such as geographic isolation, fewer services, fewer jobs, and fewer opportunities -- rural communities are ill-equipped to break out of the poverty cycle. Consequently, children who grow up in rural poverty face obstacles early in life that make it difficult for them to escape poverty as adults”.

Therein lies a need to provide educational, enrichment opportunities beyond the confines of their home, school and community.

**Extension Responses** Cornell Cooperative Extension Franklin County staff collaborated with National 4H Conference Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland to select the educational program The Wonders of Washington (WOW). In addition, a chartered bus service was secured for the journey. The stage was set to provide an opportunity for Franklin County 4H youth to participate in an educationally rich trip of a life time to our nation’s capitol, Washington, D.C. A year-long plan was established to create fund raising opportunities that would help each youth to reduce their overall fee.

**Accomplishments and Impacts** After a series of presentations outlining the W.O.W. plan, a total of 36 youth – 27 of which were from our Franklin County 4H Tribal Mentoring Afterschool program -and other 4H Club members, were committed to a monthly payment plan and to working on multiple fundraising efforts. On Wednesday, October 21, 2015, the 1,100 mile round trip, the farthest away from home for many of the youth, had begun. For the next two days, stops were made at the White House, Arlington National Cemetery, The Holocaust Museum, a tour of Capitol Hill, The National Zoo, The Natural History, Air and Space and the American Indian Museums. The final night tour, where the youth were awe struck, was a visit to the Washington and the Lincoln Monument, the - World War 2, Vietnam, and Korean War Memorials. In addition to the historical and cultural perspective, the youth learned real world autonomous ways where each were required to utilize and maintain a credit/debit card to purchase a specific number of meals.

**Collaborators** National 4H Conference Center; Office of Justice Juvenile Delinquency Program (OJJDP)

**Special funding sources (if any)** National 4-H Council- National Mentoring Program (NMP5), Tap Industries, Franklin County 4-H fundraising