Building youth advocacy and leadership around health allows youth to have a voice in creating meaningful and sustainable change in their communities. This project requires that youth have a foundational understanding of basic nutrition and physical activity. In conjunction with UCCE health and nutrition programs, this project encourages youth to build on their knowledge to become teachers, public speakers and advocates for healthy living in their communities. Youth use these skills to become agents of positive change and engaged citizens in their communities by:

- Exploring the role of individual behaviors, social, and environmental influences on food choice and physical activity.
- Engaging in citizen science data collection, analysis and problem-solving.
- Educating decision-makers on issues that impact their community.

The activities above are ideas to inspire further project development. This is not a complete list.
Expand Your Experiences!

Healthy Living

- Work with your cafeteria manager at school to develop creative names for menu items (i.e. x-ray vision carrots, California fresh burrito, etc.)
- Teach your parents about behavioral economics and show them examples at the grocery store

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

- Create a map that shows a 1-mile radius around your school, plot all of the fast-food outlets and places to buy fresh fruit or vegetables
- Survey your friends to find their favorite sugary drinks. Calculate how much sugar is in each drink and how long they would need to exercise to burn off those excess calories.
- Work with an adult to conduct a plate-waste study in your cafeteria to calculate how much food is being thrown out

Citizenship

- Organize a healthy canned food drive at your school, donate the food to the local food pantry
- Organize a school garden work day to start or reinvigorate your school garden
- Send photos and a story to a local newspaper about barriers to health and wellness in your community and/or things that youth are doing to create healthier spaces

Leadership

- Display your map, photos or presentation at Presentation Day, Food & Arts Celebration, club meetings or other approved public speaking spaces
- Talk to your cafeteria manager about becoming a salad bar ambassador and teaching students how to use the salad bar to create delicious food
- Teach others in your 4-H club about community advocacy and any successful changes you have made
- Create a list of local decision-makers from your cafeteria manager to your Mayor

Connections & Events

Presentation Day: Teach others about community advocacy by sharing how you identified a problem, collected data, and developed a solution.

National Nutrition Month (March): Contact your local Public Health Department to see if there are events being planned for Nutrition Month and how you can help.

Parent Nights at school: Display your photos or presentation at Open House night to educate parents and families about health and wellness advocacy.

Contact your county 4-H office to determine additional opportunities available.

Curriculum

- Smarter Lunchrooms Movement: http://smarterlunchrooms.org/
- YA4-H: http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/projects/y44-h/curriculum
- Mapping: http://interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth/resources.html

4-H Record Books give members an opportunity to record events and reflect on their experiences. For each project, members document their experiences, learning and development.

4-H Record Books also teach members record management skills and encourage them to set goals and develop a plan to meet those goals.

Resources

- Walkability & Bikeability Checklists: www.walkbiketoschool.org/get-set/event-ideas/walkability-bikeability-checklists#download
- Safe Routes to School: www.safes routesinfo.org
- National Nutrition Month Resources: www.eatright.org/resources/national-nutrition-month
- Playing the Policy Game: Preparing Teen Leaders to Take Action (nutrition info is dated, advocacy steps are still good) www.californiaprojectlean.org/docuserfiles/Playing%20the%20Policy%20Game%20Entire%20Manual.pdf
- UC Davis CRC Putting Youth on the Map: http://interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth/resources.html
- Find your elected officials: http://act.commoncause.org/site/PageServer?pagename=sunlight_advocacy_list_page
- What is a School Board and what do they do? www.nsba.org/about-us/frequently-asked-questions

The UC 4-H Youth Development Program does not endorse, warrant, or otherwise take responsibility for the contents of unofficial sites.