



Snapshot and Impact Story Telling Guide

Snapshots

Snapshots are one of the primary reporting mechanisms for this grant. They are simple, visual and tell a compelling story quickly. Snapshots are essential because they not only provide great content for social media and external communication, but they allow us to demonstrate to Microsoft the impact we are making.

A Snapshot is simply a high-quality photo of a kid (or kids) in action, with a descriptive caption that tells the story of how your program is advancing and making an impact in their lives and the community. The photo subject can either be of the 4-H youth leaders or their peers.

A Good Snapshot Includes:

1. A high-quality photograph of kids *doing* something related to addressing their community issue or computer science.
2. A descriptive caption (2-3 sentences) that explains what is happening in the photo and how it is related to the success of your project or the specific impact on the subject(s) lives.

Gathering Impact Stories

- **Important:** Please ensure that all youth featured in a Snapshot fill out this form (or have their parents fill out the form): <http://4-h.org/media-information-release/>
- At events that you know will be important milestones for your project or are conducive to good visuals, have a volunteer assigned to take photos.
- Focus on capturing an **action shot**, not just a headshot or posed group photo. (See photo guidelines)
 - Subject Examples (See pg. 2 for more specific examples)
 - Learning about technology opened new career/academic 'doors' for kids that they didn't think about before.
 - Speaking with community members about their project increased confidence.
 - Programming sparked new interest in CS subjects like coding, robotics, VR, etc.
 - They enjoyed learning about a new skill so much that they started using more programs/apps at home, teaching siblings or parents, started/joined additional clubs or programs, etc.
 - Programming helped grow other life skills like confidence, leadership, and teamwork, or helped spur new ways of thinking/problem solving that led to success in school
- **Submission Details:** Every month submit at least three (3) high quality photos with descriptive captions that illustrate youth and volunteers engaging in your project activities. Be sure to that all youth featured in Snapshots have filled out the 4-H media release. Snapshots should be submitted to jdepasquale@fourhcouncil.edu

Going Beyond Snapshots

One of the great things about Snapshots is that they are the seeds of longer-form impact stories. While impact stories are not a requirement of the grant, we highly encourage you to develop your

favorite Snapshots into impact stories. These longer-form stories can be tremendously useful in everything from local fundraising, to recruiting more kids, to helping secure additional funding and support from Microsoft. We want to see your impact stories! As soon as you have one ready, don't forget to submit it to the same email address listed above. We will be happy to help with editing, and may even feature your story in one of our newsletters or on the 4-H Today Blog.

Identifying Great Stories

Since telling the 4-H story is so important to your work, we recommend maintaining a “storytelling mindset” when hosting events and working with kids and volunteers. Here are tips to help find that mindset:

1. Listen actively when you engage with 4-H'ers, parents and volunteers

As a 4-H professional, you already do this every day. Thankfully, this is half the battle. The key to turning these frequent interactions into great impact stories is actively listening for details that show that kids are engaged and the programming is making a difference.

2. Think like a reporter

When speaking to kids, parents and volunteers, imagine you're a reporter looking to write a story about your programming. Think of the context of what the programming is trying to achieve: are kids learning to solve problems that affect the local community? Are they learning skills that will be applicable to their lives and careers?

- Look for examples of individual impact: Are there certain kids or teens who seem to be getting a lot out of their experience? How is the program affecting them specifically?
- Take notes and pictures: It's impossible to remember quotes, conversations and details when you're also running a whole 4-H program. That's why it's critical to bring a notepad (or phone or tablet) and take notes as you facilitate programming. Use it to record things like which youth and teens are most engaged. Write down quotes from kids and teens about what they are doing and what it means to them. If possible, bring a camera or smartphone to take photos of the kids in action—and don't forget to write down notes on who's in the photos and what they are doing.
 - Be sure any kids/teens you are planning to feature in an impact story fill out this release: <http://4-h.org/media-information-release/>.

3. Follow up and get the rest of the story

As you know, 4-H programming often has a lasting impact on youth that grows over time. As you're thinking about writing impact stories, look back through your notes and check in with kids, parents, and volunteers periodically to see whether they are continuing to develop skills or working to solve a community issue. These stories don't need to demonstrate life-changing impact—sometimes a simple anecdote can show how youth carry their 4-H skills and experiences with them.

4. Take your time choosing which stories you want to feature

Throughout the year, think of your notes and CS Snapshots as potential leads for stories you may want to write. When it comes time to submit impact stories, review your leads and choose a few to develop into stories. Once you've narrowed your list down to a few promising leads, follow up to get the details. Interview your story's subjects as if you were a reporter, recording the conversation, writing down poignant quotes and taking detailed notes.

Writing Great Stories

Many stories follow a similar pattern called "narrative structure." When you're writing an impact story, it can be helpful to frame out the story into the elements of a common narrative structure. Doing this will help you organize your thoughts, and keep the story focused, compelling and relevant.

1. "The Hook" draws your reader in

Think of your hook as a catchy introduction designed to grab your readers' attention. It should draw people in and make them want to keep reading. For impact story-writing, hooks will usually take the form of an interesting statistic, a quote, an anecdote, a question or a bold statement. There is no secret formula, but it can be helpful to write the hook *after* you write the rest of the story.

2. "The Challenge" brings context and meaning to the story

Now that you've gotten your readers' attention with a solid hook, you need them to understand what your story is about and why they should care. In impact story writing, the challenge can take many forms. In profiling a specific youth or group of youths, the challenge will likely introduce who they are and explain the primary issue(s) they were having. Perhaps they were struggling in school, or were uninterested in learning math, or lacking direction in school—whatever it is, you want to explain the issue in detail and why it matters.

3. "The Turning Point" is the climax of the story

Now that you've set up the challenge and given context for why it matters, it's time to show how your work and 4-H helped solve the problem. This is where we get to the impact. There are many ways 4-H impacts communities and young people, big and small. We want to tell the whole story.

You'll want to describe how your subject overcame their challenge(s). You want to get as descriptive as you can. Get quotes and anecdotes from your subject, and anyone else who can speak to their transformation or impact (parents, teachers).

4. "The Ending" brings it all together

The ending ties everything together and points to the future. You don't need to prove that you solved the world's problems. Try to resolve the story as much as you can, but feel free to acknowledge that there is more work to be done.

Sample Story:

Francisco Garcia Jr.



[The Hook: Bold statement]

Francisco Garcia Jr. has overcome more challenges in his seventeen years than most adults will over the course of their lifetimes.

[The Challenge]

Growing up in the small town of Roscoe, Texas, Francisco's mother was diagnosed with cancer when he was only eight years old. Around the same time, his parents went through a difficult divorce that left him feeling alone, demoralized and angry. Struggling with his self-esteem and his weight, Francisco was bullied at school and, in turn, became a bully himself. Finally, in eighth grade, Francisco suffered a severe spinal injury that nearly crippled him. His doctors told him he would be handicapped for the rest of his life.

[The Turning Point]

It is at this time that Francisco discovered 4-H. "4-H came at just the right time, gave me something to shoot for, something that I could put my hands to. It gave me a sense of vision and purpose," Francisco said. With the help of his 4-H mentors and his father, Francisco turned his life around. "4-H gave me tools and the encouragement to apply myself, to think for myself and to see that I could make a difference," recalled Francisco.

[The Ending]

Today, not only is Francisco a straight-A student and star of his football team (despite his injury), he is studying to be a biomedical engineer with the hope of creating fully functional synthetic vertebrae—an innovation that would cure his condition and help millions around the world.

Sample Interview Questions:

A good place to start with interviewing another person is by asking open ended questions and then following up with more specific questions. Below are a few recommended questions for getting started. Remember to let the interview flow naturally and you should aim for it being more like a conversation you would have with a friend or relative.

Collecting Background Information

1. Tell me about yourself and your experience with 4-H.
2. How did your interest in [X] start?
3. Can you tell me about your school and your community?
4. Are you involved in other activities besides 4-H?
5. Is there a relationship between your involvement in 4-H and your other activities?

Identifying the Challenge

1. What has been the most challenging thing you've experienced in your life? What obstacles have you had to overcome?
2. When did this (these) experiences occur?
3. Describe how you felt during this time.
4. What are the most common challenges you see facing your community?
5. Are these challenges related to your 4-H projects? If so, how?

Finding the Turning Point

1. How has your 4-H experience helped you respond to or deal with these personal and/or community challenges?
2. What actions have you taken to address these challenges?
3. Was there a specific skill or insight you learned from 4-H that helped you?
4. Have you engaged others to help address the challenges?
5. What has been the outcome of your efforts to address this challenge? Do you have any examples of the results? How have people been positively impacted by your work?

The Ending (Looking to the Future)

1. What are your future career goals and has 4-H impacted these?
How do you think the skills you have learned in 4-H have helped prepare you for the future?