Reflections on PRYDE’s First Three Years
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The mission of the Program for Research on Youth Development and Engagement (PRYDE) is to promote positive outcomes for young people by building connections between youth development research and practice. Begun in 2016 by a generous gift from Rebecca Q. Morgan ’60, PRYDE is located within Cornell’s College of Human Ecology as part of the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research.

PRYDE was designed to help fill the gap between researchers who study youth development and practitioners who work directly with young people. Although these groups have much to learn from each other, building equitable and responsible partnerships that extend over time is an ongoing challenge. Over the first three years of PRYDE, our organization has worked with Cornell University researchers and 4-H educators and program leaders across New York State to develop mutually-beneficial partnerships, the impact of which extends to youth in 4-H and undergraduates at Cornell.

This report offers a reflection on our first three years. We review progress towards our mission to build successful partnerships and offer lessons learned about the partnership process. Finally, we consider how PRYDE can best address the needs of campus and community partners moving forward.
PRYDE’s efforts across the first three years targeted five areas, which organize our report:

I. Building connections with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) 4-H educators

II. Engaging 4-H Youth in PRYDE projects

III. Involving Cornell students in translational youth development research

IV. Supporting faculty engagement and youth development research in 4-H

V. Creating new knowledge to benefit youth
I.

Building connections with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) 4-H educators

A primary goal of PRYDE is to create a solid and enduring partnership between Cornell researchers and CCE 4-H educators in support of positive youth development. Engaging with staff in New York counties who work with over 170,000 4-H youth is an opportunity to multiply the impact of PRYDE programs and activities.

Over the past three years, PRYDE has built a close working relationship between Cornell faculty and many CCE 4-H educators. These educators have contributed considerable time and energy to our organization and have ensured that our research and programs are situated to be effective. PRYDE’s approach to working with 4-H educators was organized around three strategies:

- Building a 4-H Work Team
- Leading an annual Youth Development Research Update
- Communicating beyond campus
**PRYDE 4-H Work Team**

With the guidance of Andy Turner, NY state leader of the 4-H Youth Development Program, PRYDE formed an advisory 4-H Work Team. This group is made up of seven CCE 4-H educators and program leaders from across the state:

- Heidi Feltz (Niagara County)
- Melanie Forstrom (Ulster County)
- June Mead (Broome County)
- Melissa Schroeder (Schuyler County)
- Jessica Spence (Monroe County)
- Barbara Stevens (Albany County)
- Megan Tifft (Tompkins County)

The Work Team meets regularly to advise PRYDE activities, including coming to campus once each year for a day-long working meeting with PRYDE faculty and staff. These campus meetings are paired with networking dinners to allow team members and faculty to connect informally. In these meetings and smaller team meetings throughout the year, the 4-H Work Team provided critically important guidance for PRYDE projects. In addition to providing valuable insights from the field for faculty interested in translational projects, the Work Team also serve as research ambassadors within the 4-H community, bringing news of new projects back to other practitioners in their districts and greatly accelerating the process of helping 4-H educators feel more connected to campus.

**Youth Development Research Update**

PRYDE has also engaged county 4-H educators from outside our Work Team, through involvement in other campus events hosted by 4-H (e.g., participating in a “campus connections crawl”). We also host the Youth Development Research Update conference ourselves. 4-H practitioners from across the state come to Ithaca, learning from Cornell researchers about their latest work, exploring topics via panel discussions, and interacting with each other and researchers in break-out sessions. Each conference is organized around a focal topic relevant to youth development (e.g., Productive Social Media Use in 2017, Multi-Generational Approaches to Youth Development in 2018). These “research updates” give 4-H educators empirical insight and guidance to enhance their work with youth.
Communicating Beyond Campus

In pursuit of equitable partnerships between Cornell researchers and practitioners across NY State, PRYDE has ensured that the burden of travel does not fall exclusively on the practitioners. PRYDE staff and affiliated faculty also travel out to CCE events throughout the state.

For example, PRYDE postdoctoral associate Dr. Rachel Sumner conducted eight workshops on purpose in life for 4-H educators and volunteers across the state, bringing the research to them. She then conducted focus groups to learn their views of practices to support the development of purpose among 4-H youth.

PRYDE staff participate in the New York State Annual CCE 4-H Educator Conference, presenting about new PRYDE projects and attending sessions led by 4-H educators. In addition to these face-to-face meetings, PRYDE has built a number of communication strategies to keep our 4-H partners informed about new research opportunities and findings. These include a website featuring frequently updated blogposts, a YouTube channel sharing researcher talks and interviews from PRYDE-sponsored conferences, weekly “Research News” column in the statewide 4-H Friday Newsletter, and Twitter and Facebook pages providing real-time updates on PRYDE activities.
Lessons Learned:

What advice can PRYDE offer for building a network of academic and practitioner partners?
Relationship building matters! The outreach that PRYDE staff have undertaken to build a network of contacts with the 4-H community has been time-consuming but well-received and appreciated. These relationships support reliable channels of communication, expertise, and the generation of new opportunities for engagement. Given PRYDE’s location on campus, maintaining these relationships over time will require attention and resources.

What still limits the success of our work with 4-H educators?
Most of the research projects pursued thus far in partnership with Cornell faculty have been initiated by the faculty researcher. One challenge for PRYDE moving forward is to generate strategies to integrate and support practice-inspired questions within our partnerships.
II.

Engaging 4-H Youth in PRYDE projects

In association with PRYDE’s efforts to connect with 4-H educators, we have also engaged directly with youth in 4-H. Prioritizing work with youth has helped PRYDE align our efforts with the goals and values of our 4-H partners. Over the course of three years, PRYDE’s research and programming opportunities have directly engaged more than 2,000 youth in 4-H. Some of our specific efforts to connect with youth are highlighted below.

Research Involvement

One way that 4-H youth engage with PRYDE is by taking part in applied research projects. Such projects, described further in Section V, include Karl Pillemer’s intergenerational research program and Anthony Burrow’s study of purpose in life and youth engagement in 4-H programs. Both of these studies were designed to fit within the project-based learning models used by many NY 4-H programs. For example, the purpose in life study successfully tested a brief motivational intervention to increase youth engagement in regularly-scheduled 4-H programs. Youth have also been involved in the design of our research studies; PRYDE postdoctoral fellow Rachel Sumner’s research on the impact of diversity in 4-H enlisted the expertise of teens in designing study materials. Similarly, Anthony Burrow’s work piloting new mobile technology-based intervention materials has benefited from data collection assistance from 4-H teen leaders.
Career Explorations

PRYDE researchers Jennifer Agans and Marie Cope created a workshop presented at the annual 4-H Career Explorations event, A Tour of Human Development across the Lifespan. Each summer, this event connects 20 4-H teens with human development researchers at Cornell. Teens participate in hands-on learning to discover how individuals grow and change over the course of their lives and explore the social science methods researchers use to study these processes. Highlights of the experience include tours of faculty research labs and one-on-one conversation with Cornell undergraduates who share their experiences transitioning to college and choosing a major. Youths’ learning experience culminates in a lesson on qualitative interviews drawn from Karl Pillemer’s research. Teens lead their own interview with an elder from the local Ithaca community--just as a researcher would do--focused on meaningful life advice.

“All About You” Activity Book

PRYDE’s team of researchers developed “All About You,” an activity book which was created in collaboration with BCTR graphic designer Carrie Chalmers. Custom-designed for use in 4-H, this book offers youth the opportunity to directly engage with and learn about topics such as purpose in life, identity development, gratitude, and mindfulness. Each activity is drawn from empirical research and challenges youth to think about themselves and their experience in new ways while introducing simple yet meaningful psychological constructs. This activity book is accompanied by a guide for 4-H educators to summarize the research evidence behind the activities and to provide suggestions for ways to incorporate the activities into 4-H programs.
Lessons Learned:

What approach to youth programming has PRYDE found most successful?
The best way to capitalize on the skills of PRYDE-affiliated faculty and staff is to create hands-on activities related to social science and human development. Moreover, these activities can be easily incorporated into research studies. For researchers, combining such activities with a data collection session has been a fruitful strategy to align the goals of academic and practitioner partners.

How could PRYDE connect with youth in more meaningful ways?
There is still a great deal of untapped potential for participatory research approaches (i.e., studies that integrate youth into the research process itself) in PRYDE’s work with 4-H. Moving forward, we hope to build participatory components into more PRYDE-sponsored research, involving youth as co-creators of the research experience.
Involving Cornell Students in 4-H Youth Development Research

As core features of this training experience, all PRYDE Scholars:

1. Work directly with Cornell research faculty to learn about and conduct laboratory research in various areas of youth development.
2. Partner with practitioner mentors who are 4-H leaders and manage extension-based youth development initiatives across New York State.
3. Implement a community-engaged research project of their choosing that addresses an existing need in the statewide 4-H program.
**PRYDE Scholars Curriculum**

PRYDE Scholars enroll in a four-course sequence to provide students with the background knowledge necessary to successfully lead their own community-engaged, translational research projects. Coursework is offered through the Department of Human Development and taught by PRYDE-affiliated faculty and staff.

In the first year of the Scholars program, students’ coursework introduces topics in translational research theory, methods, and ethical practice. Assignments focus on developing and communicating research knowledge for both academic and practitioner audiences. In the second year, coursework is built entirely around Scholars designing and leading an original translational research project.

In addition to gaining skills as researchers, Scholars benefit from classroom and field-based assignments that help them reflect on the development of these skills so that they are able to recognize and articulate their expertise. Our first cohort of PRYDE Scholars graduated in Spring 2018, and two additional cohorts are in the program currently.

**Faculty and Practitioner Mentoring**

Each Scholar is paired with a faculty mentor, working in their lab on translational research on youth development. Project topics vary, but all students develop applied research skills and interface with our community partners as members of a faculty research team. These mentors allow students to gain hands-on research experience in one or more applied settings. While many faculty-led projects engage with 4-H programs, students also work in other community settings (e.g., Greater Ithaca Activities Center) and school districts (e.g., Trumansburg School District, Syracuse Academy of Science).

In our first three years, Scholars have presented PRYDE-supported research at a broad range of university-sponsored and national conferences including Society for Research on Adolescence, Society for Research on Child Development, American Psychological Association, and Association for Psychological Science.
Scholar-led Research Projects with Community Partners

Scholars take the lead on designing their own original, community-engaged research project during their senior year. After a year of curricular learning, Scholars use their unique strengths and talents to implement a project of value to stakeholders.

Cohorts collaborate with our 4-H practitioner partners to identify a critical youth-relevant need to guide their research project. Our 4-H partners interface with Scholars through events on and off Cornell’s campus, connecting in person and through Zoom calls to share their career experiences and offer a practitioner’s feedback on students’ research projects. These interactions allow partners to shape the research projects to address areas of need in their organization.

For example, the first cohort of PRYDE Scholars identified a need in 4-H Programs for evaluation of the effectiveness of afterschool programs. Scholars worked collaboratively with practitioners to determine the youth outcomes most likely to be impacted by afterschool participation. They gathered validated measures of these outcomes, prepared survey materials for use with afterschool participants, and built a sophisticated statistical analysis tool to empower practitioners to their own survey data. This project, completely student-led, created resources that 4-H practitioners are actively using in the field to more effectively pursue grant funding for their educational programming.
Lessons Learned:

How has the PRYDE Scholars program attracted its network of students and mentors?
Prior to the creation of the Scholars program, there were few opportunities for College of Human Ecology undergraduates to develop expertise in youth-focused translational research. Our program has attracted talented students who are eager to work on innovative faculty research projects and see the impact of their research. Student applications to the Scholars program currently outpaces the number of placements available, which underscores the opportunity for growth of the PRYDE Scholars program.

What could improve the PRYDE Scholar experience?
Although all of our Scholars have worked in applied settings related to their research projects, only some of Scholars have truly taken advantage of opportunities to connect with practitioner mentors among PRYDE’s 4-H network. Devising better ways to facilitate and encourage these relationships is an area for future growth.
Supporting Faculty Engagement in Youth Development Research in 4-H

At its inception, PRYDE included four faculty-led projects, intending them to serve as templates for building successful research collaborations with NYS 4-H practitioners. In order to expand its network of collaborators, PRYDE has pursued strategies to attract new faculty affiliates and raise the visibility of our work both within the Cornell community and among the national and international community of scholars pursuing applied research on youth development.

Network of PRYDE Faculty Affiliates

PRYDE began with four faculty affiliates, one for each of the original projects, all from the Department of Human Development. Over the course of the past three years, the number of faculty, academic researchers, and post-doctoral scholars who have connected with PRYDE has grown to represent many more departments and colleges. PRYDE-affiliated researchers are located in the CHE departments of Human Development and Design and Environmental Analysis and in the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research as well as in the CALS department of Communication. To date, 11 Cornell faculty members have become PRYDE affiliates, joining research partnerships through PRYDE or working directly with our PRYDE Scholars, and 25 faculty members have connected to PRYDE in some way—attending PRYDE conferences, presenting at the Youth Development Research Update, or joining networking events with 4-H educators and program leaders.
PRYDE-Affiliated Conferences

PRYDE organizes and hosts conferences that connect PRYDE-affiliated faculty and practitioners to national and international experts on topics related to their research partnerships. These conferences benefit PRYDE-affiliated faculty by raising the visibility of their innovative work. PRYDE researchers who attend these conferences learn from the cutting-edge youth development research undertaken by leaders in the field. To that end, PRYDE brought prominent researchers and policy makers (Lawrence Aber, New York University; Robert Sellers, University of Michigan; and Lisa Lauxman, 4-H National Headquarters) to campus in May 2016 for our inaugural event. These leading youth development specialists provided valuable consultation on the development of PRYDE and set the tone for the rigorous, impactful scholarship that PRYDE aims to support.

During our first three years, PRYDE hosted or co-hosted four conferences to connect our work to the broader research and practice community.

- In October 2016, PRYDE organized a conference on Purpose and Health across the Life Span in Half Moon Bay, CA for leading scholars studying purpose in life and its connections to well-being. Attendees answered questions posed by 4-H and Cornell community members and recorded video clips outlining the translational implications of their work to be disseminated to 4-H.
- PRYDE co-sponsored the second annual purpose-themed conference, Purpose in a Diverse Society in October 2017 with Washington University in St. Louis, MO.
- Also in 2017, PRYDE hosted a November conference linked to another of our theme projects, on the topic of Media Literacy and Citizen Development among Youth and Emerging Adults in Ann Arbor, MI. This conference brought together leading scholars from across the country studying social media and fake news and their impact on youth and community development.
- Inspired by the success of these conferences, PRYDE hosted the third annual purpose conference at Cornell University in November 2018, Purpose in Context. This last conference, much like PRYDE’s inaugural event, brought experts in psychology, sociology, and social work to Cornell’s campus, making their work accessible to the campus community, including the PRYDE Scholars.
As a key feature of each of these conferences, we ask presenters to reflect on the implications of their work for the youth practice community. These capsule interviews invite academic researchers to consider how their work relates to 4-H, and recorded interviews are made available in an online repository for PRYDE’s academic and practitioner partners.

Lessons Learned:

What approaches have been most effective at expanding the network of researchers who know and/or work with PRYDE?
Faculty are drawn to PRYDE first and foremost because they are interested in applied research with youth in 4-H. However, sponsoring work with talented undergrads through the PRYDE Scholars program has also helped to attract faculty affiliates. In addition, some of PRYDE’s growth in connections with faculty is a result of PRYDE-sponsored conferences, which offer appealing opportunities to share work and connect with colleagues.

How can PRYDE ensure that it benefits more faculty and practitioners over time?
PRYDE has not yet fully realized the potential to connect to programs, organizations, and initiatives across Cornell pursuing related community-engaged research goals. Connecting more effectively with relevant campus-wide groups may help us identify new potential partners and ensure that PRYDE both contributes to and learns from knowledge developed through community-engaged research across Cornell.
IV.

Creating New Knowledge to Benefit Youth

In our first three years, PRYDE funding supported applied research and interventions in four thematic areas. These projects seemed best-poised to speedily generate knowledge capable of translation to benefit young people and their families. The four themes were:

1. Youth purpose
2. Healthy transitions
3. Intergenerational connections
4. Productive social media use.

These projects began in different stages—one project began with a literature review while another already had a fully-developed youth intervention—and covered a wide variety of topics, providing a set of case studies elucidating the range of ways faculty can collaborate with 4-H. Accomplishments and lessons learned in each of these areas are highlighted next.
Youth Purpose (Anthony Burrow)

The Youth Purpose theme area focused on how a sense of purpose in life – or a broad intention to contribute to the world – can serve as a developmental asset for youth. As the leader of this theme area, Anthony Burrow extended research from his Purpose and Identity Processes Lab into the 4-H setting, working with 4-H program leaders to design a study to determine the impact of writing about one’s purpose in life on program engagement and learning.

The resulting Purpose Engagement Study featured an experimental design embedded in youth 4-H experiences. This study combined the research motivation of investigating the benefits of thinking about purpose with the practical motivation of testing a strategy to help youth get the most out of their 4-H experiences. PRYDE staff were involved in the data collection effort for this study, and their individual travel to many NYS counties and programs was a necessary step in establishing relationships around the state. Study findings are now published in the Journal of Youth Development, and each participating 4-H county received an individualized report summarizing youth engagement with their county’s program offerings.

Following the insights of the Purpose Engagement Study, the Youth Purpose research team designed a smartphone application that prompts 4-H participants to write about their purpose in life. The design of the app, named “Pioneer,” has involved two PRYDE Scholars and a Cornell undergraduate software developer. Piloting with 4-H youth suggested promising benefits to engagement with career-related programs. Through the use of technology to provide a brief intervention experience and collect data, this project is exploring new ways for research teams to work with 4-H program leaders and youth who may be located across long distances of NYS.

Dr. Burrow and Dr. Sumner also examined the development of youth purpose in life within NYS 4-H programs, with the support of Federal Capacity Funds from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. This project examined how 4-H educators promote youth purpose within 4-H programs from the perspective of both educators and youth participants.
In the first phase of this project, Dr. Sumner led a series of workshops and focus groups with 4-H educators and volunteers around NYS to build a shared understanding of the concept of purpose and learn how practitioners address youth purpose in their programming. Based on session results, the research team created a new measure of youth activities related to purpose development and assessed the reliability and validity of this measure among youth in 4-H.

Taken together, the Youth Purpose projects have been particularly successful in designing research projects that incorporate current 4-H programs into the data collection process (e.g., measuring the impact of writing about purpose on engagement with pre-existing programs, surveying youth about opportunities for purpose development in 4-H). The topic of youth purpose has offered fertile ground for research ideas that work hand-in-hand with 4-H programming goals.

*Healthy Transitions (Jane Mendle)*

Jane Mendle led PRYDE’s Healthy Transitions theme area, which built on the long-standing partnership between her Adolescent Transitions Lab and NYS 4-H summer camps. The goal of this project was to study how young people experience the transition to adolescence and explore prevention approaches to protect youth from the negative experiences often associated with this transition.

Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies show steep increases in psychological problems when children reach this transition, including spikes in depression, anxiety, aggression, rule-breaking, self-injurious behavior, disordered eating, school failure, and conflict with peers and parents. In collaboration with 4-H summer camps, Dr. Mendle’s project team implemented an expressive writing intervention, which directed youth to write about times of change in their lives, and surveyed youth responses to their transitions.

The Healthy Transitions theme area is the only theme to partner with NYS 4-H camps, offering a model for a successful research project with youth in summer camps. Dr. Mendle’s project team designed their expressive writing activity to fit into the timespan of a typical camp activity session. Youth were able to participate in a thoughtfully-designed, hands-on activity with potential psychological benefits, while also providing useful data for the research team.
In 2017, Dr. Mendle and her team launched an updated version of the expressive writing study that included an autobiographical memory activity and an educational segment on how to think like a psychologist. Youth were then mailed follow-up surveys to monitor longitudinal change. Notably, the project team created a hands-on learning activity, this time focused on a social science lesson, to complement their data collection effort, so as to ensure that participating youth could directly benefit from taking part in the research study.

Dr. Mendle’s involvement of PRYDE Scholars in her theme project has been a model of success. Thus far, three PRYDE Scholars have been involved in the Healthy Transitions project, and their involvement and effort has led to noteworthy presentations and publications for academic and practitioner audiences. For example, PRYDE Scholar Julia Lesnick worked with CCE Broome County through a CCE-sponsored internship co-mentored by Dr. Mendle and Broome County 4-H Work Team member June Mead. Julia applied her knowledge of adolescent mental health to design a trauma-informed practice training for youth development practitioners in Broome County. It included a 4-hour live workshop with interactive activities, a training handbook with guidelines for incorporating content into practice and suggestions for evaluating training outcomes, and participant take-home materials. Over 50 youth service providers participated in the in-person workshop in Broome County in September 2017, which was followed by a webinar in November 2017 hosted through Cornell Cooperative Extension’s Campus County Connection series to expand access to this training beyond Broome County. PRYDE Scholars have presented their work related to this project at national academic conferences such as those for the Society for Social and Personality Psychology and the Society for Research on Adolescence.
**Intergenerational Connections (Karl Pillemer)**

Karl Pillemer’s research explores timely questions of how to best prepare younger generations for the challenges that an aging society will bring. Efforts to help build understanding and empathy across generations are one valuable step in preparation for these changes. Exposing young people to active and productive elders has been found to improve attitudes toward aging and foster openness to contact with older people. These goals are the foundation of Dr. Pillemer’s Intergenerational Connections theme area with PRYDE, which has focused on the evaluation and dissemination of a research-based program to facilitate intergenerational contact and change attitudes towards the elderly among participating youth. This program, *Building a Community Legacy Together (BCLT)*, offered youth in 4-H an opportunity to interview older community members about their advice for living full lives.

The BCLT program integrates social science skills into its lessons for youth. Participating teens learn interviewing skills and data interpretation methods and design their own question about the advice they would like to learn from older people. Youth are then matched with older individuals and conduct interviews. The project culminates in a public presentation of what the youth learned from their elders.

The theme project team conducted a second wave of program evaluation using a randomized, control group design with programs in NYS 4-H. This represents one of the few times such a rigorous evaluation design has been used in the 4-H program on any topic. In three NYS counties, youth and elders were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups, and pre-test and post-test surveys were conducted.

The 4-H context afforded the opportunity for a controlled design evaluation, but also supported the next phase of study, which involved building a dissemination mechanism to support the implementation of BCLT by 4-H program leaders in real-world settings. More specifically, Dr. Pillemer’s team designed a remote program leader training model using video conferencing, which will facilitate national and international dissemination. Due in part to these advances, the BCLT program has been implemented in 13 different NYS counties, providing evidence of how the program can function in many different settings led by different people.
PRYDE Scholars were part of the project team, helping to support training and data collection efforts. This dissemination effort has culminated in the submission of the BCLT curriculum to the National 4-H Council for acceptance as a national 4-H curriculum offering. This project also attracted international interest; the BCLT program was adopted by the University of Venice Ca’Foscari in Venice, Italy. The program was translated into Italian, conducted with 30 youth and elders, who also collected data. PRYDE now has a formal relationship with the university to promote intergenerational programs in Italy.

Among PRYDE’s four theme projects, the Intergenerational Connections theme area was the only one that had a fully developed, evidence-based youth program from the outset. The BCLT program design was well-aligned with the hands-on, project-based learning model that guides much of the program experiences that 4-H provides its youth. Participating youth took part in a meaningful learning experience and shared their results with their community; these qualities were attractive to 4-H programs in many counties and Dr. Pillemer’s team found ways to offer their innovative program to 4-H that also allowed them to also conduct needed evaluation and dissemination-related research. The Intergenerational Connections theme project also spearheaded one of PRYDE’s annual Youth Development Research Updates in 2018, which provided an opportunity to teach 4-H educators about new research on intergenerational contact while also informing a large group of 4-H program leaders about the potential to be involved in BCLT research and programming.

**Productive Social Media Use (Elaine Wethington and Natalie Bazarova)**

A collaboration between faculty members Elaine Wethington in the Department of Human Development and Natalie Bazarova in the Department of Communication, this theme area focused on how youth can successfully transition into positive uses of social media as they enter young adulthood.

Popular opinion on social media often emphasizes the risks it may pose for young people—too much screen time or invasions of privacy, yet social media also carries the potential to support healthy adolescent development. The Productive Social Media Use theme project approached social media use as a normal part of social development that carries potential benefits.
At the outset, the research team conducted an extensive literature review of this emerging field. This review explored ways in which social media is employed to improve youth programs, support mental and physical health, and promote civic engagement. In addition, early input from 4-H practitioners stressed a need for programs that address cyberbullying and healthy social media use. Combining insight from this literature with an innovative social media platform developed in Dr. Bazarova’s Social Media Lab, the Productive Social Media Use team designed a program to engage 4-H youth in media education modules and evaluated knowledge gained as a result of this intervention. In preparation for the implementation of these interventions, they consulted with 4-H practitioners, including members of the PRYDE 4-H Work Team.

The new media literacy program that resulted is called Social Media TestDrive, and it combines lesson content adapted from leading advocacy efforts (e.g., Common Sense Media, Harvard University’s Youth and Media Program, Fordham University’s Privacy Educators Program) with a social media simulator that allows youth to practice interacting with others online on a “real” social networking site. An initial version of Social Media TestDrive has been piloted in collaboration with five 4-H educators, reaching 220 youth.

The Productive Social Media Use theme area progressed from an initial literature review all the way to the design and pilot of a media literacy program. Along the way, the project team has leveraged strengths of PRYDE, working with PRYDE Scholars, collaborating with 4-H practitioners in both the design and the pilot of materials, and hosting both a Youth Development Research Update for practitioners and a PRYDE-sponsored Theme Conference for the nations’ leading research and practice experts in social media education. The project’s success is reflected in the academic presentations and publications (e.g., ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems) and the practitioner- and youth-focused webinars and presentations (e.g., 4-H STARR workshop, CCE webinar) that have come out of this project. Finally, a newly-funded collaboration between this project team and Common Sense Media will continue expanding the scope of this work, bringing important new programming opportunities to NYS 4-H.
Lessons Learned:

What has PRYDE learned from these theme projects about research in the 4-H setting?
The topics of these four projects are drawn from four disparate areas of youth developmental science and each project began at a different point (more basic vs. applied research questions, more exploratory vs. fully defined research agendas). Yet all four projects were able to design and conduct research with youth in 4-H, operating through county CCE groups. The 4-H setting can support translational research moving from more basic to more applied. And in each theme area, faculty-led research teams created projects that could inform programming with youth and reported their findings through networks that were accessible to practitioner partners.

PRYDE is now better able to determine the types of projects that are likely to be successful in partnership with 4-H.
Working within the 4-H network poses limitations; for example, researchers hoping to reach a large number of youth in a relatively short time frame encountered a challenge. The intensive, small group nature of many 4-H programs is not a good fit for all types of research, even if topically it fits the interests of 4-H practitioners. Research projects may need to invoke longer-term and sustained recruitment strategies with 4-H partners than with schools or other communities, until more abundant and accessible networks are established throughout the state.

Projects had particular success when operating within the project-based format that characterizes much of the programming within 4-H.
Studies focused on collecting data from individual youth outside of their time in 4-H programs have been more of a challenge than those that offer a hands-on learning experience within a small group session.
Summary

In our initial three-year funding period, PRYDE has guided the development of new partnerships between Cornell researchers and county 4-H program staff, which have proven fruitful in creating new research knowledge that speaks meaningfully to practice-relevant questions. Our activities working with both youth in 4-H and undergraduate students at Cornell have been an integral part of strengthening these partnership-building processes. In order to create learning opportunities for youth in 4-H, PRYDE has called upon the expertise of our affiliated researchers, and this attention to offering meaningful positive youth development experiences underscores PRYDE’s commitment to serving the needs of our community partners. Our work with Cornell undergraduate in the College of Human Ecology through the PRYDE Scholars program has been at the heart of PRYDE’s work over the first three years. Embedding this undergraduate learning opportunity into PRYDE’s broader mission of building collaborative research has provided a shared focal point of interest for our faculty and community-partners while also attracting new funding opportunities (e.g., a fall 2018 crowdfunding initiative) to our program. Taken together, PRYDE’s activities over the past three years have laid the foundation for the promotion of deep and enduring collaborations among researchers, county 4-H program staff, and Cornell students to facilitate positive youth development among the thousands of 4-H youth in New York State and beyond.

We believe that PRYDE’s rapid progress in these first three years is indicative of the timeliness of our efforts to facilitate community-engaged research. The volume of research projects and outreach activities undertaken (see summary below) in the past years through PRYDE have led to new connections and relationships between members of our campus and community constituencies. At the same time, the maintenance of these networks is likely to require a continuation of the intermediary functions provided by PRYDE. The PRYDE organization provides a stable point of entry for both faculty and practitioners looking to build opportunities for research with youth.
PRYDE’s staff play a critical role as a connector, helping to smooth challenges likely to arise when pursuing these types of partnerships, while also assisting with the management of research priorities for a changing set of potential partnership members. We expect that this individualized relationship building function of PRYDE has been critical to our success.

As PRYDE enters its fourth year, our priorities are shifting to reflect the lessons we’ve learned. PRYDE’s faculty-led projects provided an invaluable testing ground to explore the range of questions and methodologies afforded by the 4-H context. In the future, we will invest even more in our PRYDE Scholar-led projects, which have proven successful thus far. These projects provide a mechanism through which PRYDE can answer questions generated from the field. Moving forward, PRYDE is investing more in the talents of our Cornell undergraduates to address research needs prioritized by our 4-H partners. A related goal for the future is to involve 4-H youth more fully in these research projects, drawing upon participatory action research principles to ensure that the youth who encounter these projects can personally benefit from their participation. Notably, the success of these student projects relies on the high-quality training that PRYDE Scholars receive from their faculty mentors, who remain key contributors to PRYDE’s mission. Additionally, PRYDE’s highest priorities include the continuation of our 4-H Work Team advisory board, whose guidance is a critical source of feedback and planning as we help connect partners and build new tools and resources.

The reflections offered in this report provide a look at where we’ve been, but also offer clarity as to where we’re heading next. It is important to acknowledge that the progress we have made would not have been possible without the substantive investment made by Rebecca Morgan to initiate this project, for which we are very thankful. Reflection is a critical part of PRYDE’s role as a core connector between the range of stakeholders interested in youth development. PRYDE’s future growth will depend upon our ability to reflexively evaluate and improve partnership processes and outcomes as we build and test new methods and tools over time. We look forward to continuing to learn how best to serve the needs of our community and campus partners, and we are grateful to the exceptional team of faculty, practitioners, staff, students, and youth who have worked together to conduct research in the real-world settings in which youth live and grow.
Appendix: PRYDE Awards, Publications, and Presentations

PRYDE Funding & Awards


Awarded (2019): Engaged Scholar Prize to Anthony Burrow, recognizing faculty achievement in innovative approaches to connecting community engagement and scholarly activities. CU Office of Engaged Initiatives ($30,000).

Selected (2018): PRYDE Scholars Program crowdfunding initiative sponsored by Cornell Crowdfunding November Campaign ($6,000).


Peer Reviewed Publications


Academic Conference Presentations


Koch, M. K., McKone, K., & Mendle, J. (2018, April). The pubertal transition and perceived role disruption. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence, Minneapolis, MN.


Mendle, J. (2018, April). Puberty and mental health: What can we learn by integrating developmental pathways across the lifespan? (Discussant). Symposium held at the annual meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence, Minneapolis, MN.


**Student Theses and Awards**

Elena Gupta ’19 (PRYDE Scholar) and Rebecca Li ’19 (PRYDE Scholar) both won the Spring 2018 Alan D. Mathios Research and Service Grant.

Lucie Fan ‘18 (PRYDE Scholar) completed her undergraduate thesis with mentor Gary Evans: *The Mediating Role of Inhibitory Control on Childhood Poverty and Economic Decision Making*.

Julia Lesnick’18 (PRYDE Scholar) was awarded the 2018 Human Ecology Alumni Association’s Outstanding Senior Award, the Biddy Martin Undergraduate Prize for Writing in LGBTQ Studies, and the Florence Halpern Award for Leadership in Community Service.

Emily Rosenthal (PRYDE Scholar) won the Marjorie A. Corwin Undergraduate Summer Research Fellowship from the College of Human Ecology at Cornell University in 2017; and in 2018 won the Robinson Award for Academic Excellence, the Henry Ricciuti Award for Outstanding Seniors in Human Development, and selected Degree Marshall for the College of Human Ecology.

Emily Rosenthal (PRYDE Scholar) completed her undergraduate thesis with mentor Jane Mendle: *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Identity: Diagnostic Correlates, Contextual Malleability, and Domain Specificity*.

Greta Sloan ’18 (PRYDE Scholar) won the 2018 Cornell University Relations’ Campus-Community Leadership Award.

Julia Lesnick (PRYDE Scholar) won an award for her poster at the 32nd annual Spring Research Forum hosted by the Cornell Undergraduate Research Board (CURB) in the psychology and social sciences subject category: Lesnick, J. M., McKone, K. M. P., & Mendle, J. (2017, April). *Rejection sensitivity mediates the association between negative urgency and peer relationships*. 
Practitioner Outreach, Presentations, & Workshops


Taft, J., & Bazarova, N. (2018, April). *Smart Social Media skills for teens.* Workshop for youth delivered at the annual 4-H State Teen Action Representative Retreat (STARR), Syracuse, NY.


Sumner, R. (2017, October). *4-H program practices believed to promote purpose in life.* Presentation and poster delivered at the annual conference of the New York State Association of Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Educators, Ellicottville, NY.


Agans, J. P., Sumner, R., & Koch, M. K. (2017, April). *Connecting with youth development research.* Presentation as part of the Campus Connections Crawl hosted by the Cornell STEM 4-H Project Work Team.


Agans, J., Carmichael, C., & Gannon, N. (2016, October). Campus connections – “This is my story” – Success stories shared from county colleagues who have vibrant campus partnerships. Panel discussion organized at the New York State Association of Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Educators’ Conference, Geneva NY.


Agans, J. P. (2016, May). Collaborating with youth development researchers. Presentation and focus group at the North Central Regional 4-H Educators’ meeting.


Agans, J. P. (2016, February). *Collaborating with youth development researchers.* Presentation and focus group at the South Central Regional 4-H Educators’ meeting.

Agans, J. P. (2016, January). *Collaborating with youth development researchers.* Presentation and focus group at the North Country Regional 4-H Educators’ meeting.
