



IRON COUNTY

Gloria Fauerbach
On-Site Supervisor
(262)548-7784
gloria.fauerbach@ces.uwex.edu



Linda Sunde
CNCS, WI State Director
(414) 297-1118 X11
lsunde@cns.gov

UWEX AmeriCorps*VISTA Success Story

4-H L.E.A.F.

by **Cortney Ofstad & Jean Davis,**
Summer VISTA Associates

The 4-H L.E.A.F. (leadership, experience, adventure and friendship) program began its second year in the Saxon and Mercer communities. The program was continued in 2009 because there were no other organized youth programs in these communities. This year, we focused on a few different topics than the previous year.

In the program, we ran a day camp with students working on arts and crafts projects, wind energy science projects, nutrition lessons and physical activity. Two days of camp were held in each community for each of six weeks. The students that had participated in the program last year were given youth leadership positions. They assisted us in teaching some of the lessons as well as helping younger students throughout the summer. We decided to make healthy lifestyle choices our major emphasis.

A recent study found that 22% of Hurley School District students were obese and another 11% were at risk for obesity. These levels are higher than the state average and over half of our students attend the Hurley School. This study identified healthy food choices and low levels of physical activity as habits to be addressed with education.

We incorporated “My Pyramid” into our lesson plans and did many forms of physical activity. When students were originally asked what physical activity was, many listed running or other forms of sports. Because of the small community, it is hard for students to get enough people to play a soccer or baseball game, and straight line running wasn’t an activity they found enjoyable. We taught them games that could be played with any number of kids. Activities such as dancing and playground incorporated games such as jail break and lava monster taught the kids alternate ways to be physically active.

The students were also encouraged to make healthy choices when eating. We did nutrition related activities such as journals that showed them different foods from each category, healthy recipes and what was considered healthy versus unhealthy choices. We based our daily snack on the food group we were learning about each day to help them better understand the food pyramid.



Eight out of ten students said, because of 4-H L.E.A.F. this summer, they play outside whenever they can.

The students increased their knowledge food groups over the course of the program. At the beginning of the program students would ask us “What food group is my sandwich in?” or “Is peanut butter a healthy food choice?” By the end of the program students were able to break their lunches down into each food group, and were able to decide if their choices were healthy or not. In our survey, one L.E.A.F student learned about healthy living choices during 4-H “by (the teachers) feeding us different foods and doing the food pyramid sheet.” In Saxon, the end of program survey revealed that eight out of ten students knew that they could make many choices to live in a healthy way because of their learning in 4-H this summer.

The students also learned other forms of physical activity. At the beginning of the program many students did not realize dancing and playground games be considered a form of physical activity. Once they learned these could count towards their daily physical activity time, they always chose to either dance or play one of their favorite outdoor games. Learning these new activities made them excited and motivated to continue to be physically active. In the same survey for Saxon, eight out of ten students stated that they play outside whenever they can.

The 4-H L.E.A.F. program was successful this year with 18 students attending between both locations. This program gave students a summer school opportunity and increased their knowledge on nutrition and physical activity to help them lead a healthy lifestyle. One student commented on what they learned, “(they) showed us that fruit is better than chocolate, vegetables are better than candy and physical activity instead of video games”.



4-Hers enjoyed many different types of physical activity.



4-Hers logged healthy eating and physical activity in their Healthy Living journals.



Nutritious snacks were prepared and enjoyed by 4-H L.E.A.F. members each day.