

Urban 4-H "Wild about Animals" Expansion Activity

Situation: The Brown County Urban 4-H Program began six years ago so that a larger number of children could benefit from 4-H. The purpose of this program is to bring 4-H to kids who wouldn't find it on their own. The program is designed to reach youth who attend at-risk schools. These schools are determined to be at-risk based on the high percentage of students who utilize free and reduced lunch prices. These schools are all located in the near-downtown Green Bay area. Since these students all live in the downtown area, they do not often get the opportunity to explore nature and experience it on a first hand basis.

Response: In response to the need for further education on the animals of Wisconsin the Brown County Urban 4-H Program, the Green Bay Area Public Schools, 21st Century Community Learning Centers and the Fallen Timbers Environmental Center collaborated to provide youth with the opportunity to learn about nature first hand. "Wild about Animals" was a 6-week program focused on environmental education, specifically the adaptations of common Wisconsin animals, which reached 70 youth in the 21CLC's 4-H After School Program. The program culminated with an all-day field trip to Fallen Timbers Environmental Center. While at Fallen Timbers, the group had an orientation to Wisconsin wildlife, worked on team building, went on a hike, roasted hotdogs over an open fire for lunch and played games focused on environmental concepts. Each youth also received their very own pair of binoculars to use to watch birds. The field trip was funded by a Northeast District Innovative Program grant.

Results: The program had a positive impact on the youth involved. Each child who participated in the program, and especially those who went on the field trip, gained a great deal of knowledge about several common Wisconsin animals and their adaptations for survival. This was a positive step in educating youth to become positive stewards for wildlife. The information was presented in a fun way, which helped to keep the youth interested. Many asked when we were taking another field trip.

Evidence: A pre/post test was given to the youth at the beginning of the field trip and again at the end. The test contained five questions about what the youth would be learning during their trip. On the pre-test, youth were able to answer an average of 71% of the questions correctly. On the post-test, they answered an average of 91% of the questions correctly. The field trip participants learned how to spot wildlife and spent the entire bus ride back to school pointing out animals that they saw.

Submitted by Sarah Schultz Brown County Urban 4-H Program Assistant May 26, 2004