



Monica Lobenstein
On-Site Supervisor
(715)284-4257



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

UWEX AmeriCorps*VISTA Success Story

By Katrina Quall, VISTA Member

This summer I worked at the Boys and Girls Club of Jackson County doing 4-H outreach. Each day I planned an hour-long 4-H activity around the weekly theme. Every week was a different theme. At our Boys and Girls Club we

take eight to eighteen year olds; however, we do not have many teenagers. The majority is third through sixth graders.

I was most excited for Holiday week. I planned for a different holiday each day of the week. Some of the holidays were: the Fourth of July, Chinese New Year, and Kwanzaa. For Chinese New Year I helped the kids make their own dragon with egg cartons. This project really taught the kids some lessons about patience and listening. For this project we used paint so the kids had to wait for the paint to dry; they had to cut the body parts just so. Some of the kids didn't listen as well as others, so their dragons didn't turn out as well. To celebrate the Fourth of July we made acrostic poems which strengthened the children's writing and communication skills. For Kwanzaa we made corn collages with real popcorn. This lesson showed them how holidays around the world are similar. We talked about how Kwanzaa and Thanksgiving were similar. The part that I enjoyed most about this particular week was that I was able to teach the kids about different holidays. It was a great way to teach the kids about diversity.

We also had a bugs and butterflies week. During this week we learned about beetles and then made our own from Plaster of Paris. This lesson let the kids use their creativity. I also arranged for a speaker to come in and talk to the boys and girls about insects. Our speaker came from our community partner at the Ho Chunk Nation. She did a great job at explaining different bugs and even brought some insects in for the kids to identify. I think everyone enjoyed this activity. Even the staff thought the speaker's presentation was awesome. The entire club saw our speaker's presentation. The life lessons learned were insect identification and listening skills. We had a friendship and family week. During this week the lessons were focused on team building skills, communication, and ancestry research and discussion. Also, during this week the children made a family crest, participated in a tag team drawing, and a friendship game.

During our Olympics week the kids filled in a chart of ten different Olympic countries with their medal counts. After filling the chart the kids made a graph of the information, they colored flags from different countries and we talked about these countries. The life skills we worked on throughout this week were: graphing skills, following and listening to directions, and research skills.

We also had a Down on the Farm week. This was a very big week for 4-H. The main focus of this week was on service projects. One boy and three girls helped at the 4-H food stand at the fair. At the food stand the children helped prepare food, filled orders, and helped keep the food stand clean. Some of the kids didn't know what to expect when helping at the food stand. However, by the time we left many of them said that they enjoyed the experience. One girl even wanted to stay after our shift and said she would like to help with the food stand next year. We also assisted with the 4-H fair recycling. Our club worked two shifts. At first I had trouble getting kids to come and help with the recycling. The first shift I brought two kids. When we began, the two boys weren't all that excited...it was a dirty job, but well worth it. Even though we had a few mishaps during our first shift of recycling, the boys both said they had fun. Our other shift was the day after the end of the fair, so there was a lot to recycle. I managed to bring five children for our second shift of recycling. We split into teams to find recyclable items. These kids were also a bit apprehensive about recycling because of the "yuk" factor...by the time we left though they all said they had a good time. The life skills worked on during this week were: team building and volunteering. I think the major reason why everyone enjoyed these service projects was because we were helping to better the world.

I also had the agriculture and FFA teacher from our High School come in. He did a presentation on agriculture. He made cheese with the kids. He did a great job of incorporating them into the lesson. The lesson involved lots of team work and plenty of listening skills.

I have had a marvelous time as a summer VISTA. But more importantly than my experiences, I know that I have helped to teach the children of the Boys and Girls Club of Jackson County some vital life lessons. I know that they can use what they learned over the course of the summer for school and their personal lives.