Promoting Children’s Health: An Afterschool Health Literacy Program

An afterschool health literacy program was developed in collaboration with the health professions programs and the Office of Interprofessional Scholarship, Service, and Education and Holy Name School's aftercare program.

Health professions faculty and students from physical therapy and pharmacy met with administrative staff from Holy Name in the Summer of 2010 to determine health-related topics appropriate for three age levels attending the afterschool program (3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 years).

The health literacy modules were created by 4 physical therapy students as part of a scholarly project and by 8 senior pharmacy students as part of their Community Outreach clinical rotation. The students followed a template from an elementary health education program developed by the National Institutes of Health.

Pharmacy rotation students spent 30-35 hours creating the educational programs with age-appropriate educational content, hands-on activities, and fun, interactive physical games.

Students from physical therapy (4), pharmacy (16), and occupational therapy (2) participated in longitudinal (4 weeks) service experiences. Two 4-week sessions were offered at Holy Name during the fall semester. These students provided 200 service hours during these sessions.

Holy Name 9-12 year old and 3-5 year old students participating in physical and hands-on activity with Creighton University first year pharmacy students.

Holy Name Student Feedback

(What did they like best about the afterschool programs?)

♦ “All, exercising, hula hoops and races, teeth, bone health and snacks, parachute games, duck duck goose, Sesame Street videos, coloring.”
♦ “Great activities-kept us busy and moving.”
♦ “Poison Prevention (identifying household products that are poisonous).”
♦ “Most activities were great. More snacks, going to the gym more to play and do activities.”
♦ “Heart Health (keeping your heart healthy with physical activity).”

Health Professions Student Feedback

(Reflective comments to “What are the three most important things you have learned about serving others in need from this longitudinal experience?”)

♦ “Kids desire and deserve attention. They know more than we think.”
♦ “Leave judgment at the door.”
♦ “Children love attention and learning. Commitment builds relationships. Struggles can be dealt with over time.”
♦ “Patience is golden. Service at any level is fulfilling. Sacrifice of time makes a huge impact on appreciation of the experience.”
♦ “Getting to know someone personally can make a big difference in the opportunities to serve.”
♦ “Everything you do or say makes a big difference in the child’s life.”
♦ “We benefit just as much from the service as the people we serve.”

Ignatian Values

Health professions students’ reflective feedback correlates to Ignatian Values such as Cura personalis and men and women for others.

♦ The need for positive figures and examples.
♦ “Every child has a different personality so you need to adjust your approach to each one.”
♦ “You can relate to anyone-regardless of culture or background-on some level.”
♦ “I discovered how important patience is when working with diverse groups.”
♦ “Minorities/prejudice in kids don’t exist.”

Holy Name Parent Feedback

♦ “My daughter was full of new information about the weekly topic!”
♦ “We planned out a menu of healthy snacks from the handout list of examples.”
♦ “My daughter really enjoyed the Creighton students. In fact, looked forward to attending Tuesdays.”
♦ “They seem to enjoy the program thus far. They didn’t want to leave.”
♦ “My child came home every Tuesday talking about the activities….and would talk about things throughout the week. The activities were great! Good Job!”

Heart Health
Physical Activity/Yoga
Stress Management
Bone Health
Poison Prevention
Germs and Good Handwashing

First Aid and Safety
Personal Hygiene
Dental Hygiene
Good Sleep Habits
Building Good Relationships