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Summer Enrichment at Haddington Townhouses Better Tomorrows

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**Summer Enrichment at Haddington Townhouses Better Tomorrows**

Bridging the Gaps Summer Internship Program

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**The Community Site**

Haddington Townhouses Better Tomorrows is located in West Philadelphia. Better tomorrows is a non profit organization that provides social services to residents, and has a mission to empower individuals, families, and neighborhoods to thrive. During the summer months, Haddington Townhouses offers a summer enrichment program for children ages 6-12 to engage in various educational and physical activities. These include money smarts, outdoor games, dental and cardiovascular health education, arts and crafts, and much, much more.

**Project Goals**

- To provide the child and adolescent residents of Haddington Townhouses with a educational and fun program that keeps them active and mentally stimulated during their summer break.
- To learn about the health disparities in underserved areas and devise ideas to fix them.
- To provide a safe and healthy environment for kids to learn and be a listening ear for any kid that needs to talk.
- To teach about how to have a healthy lifestyle and the consequences of not taking care of one's cardiovascular health.
- To teach “Money Smarts” - core values on making, spending, and budgeting money.

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**HEALTH AND FITNESS**

**Oral Health**

The children were educated about dental hygiene that included proper brushing and flossing techniques and the consequences of poor dental care. The lessons included demonstrations and trivia. Each child was then given their own toothbrush, floss, and toothpaste to take home. Additionally, the children made their own natural toothpaste from peppermint oil and baking soda.

**Heart Healthy**

A key part of this summer was making sure the children knew how to live fit and nutritious lives and to have them understand the benefits to their heart in doing so. We had several worksheets and activities that highlighted important heart related facts. One such activity was taking the child's blood pressure and discussing normal limits. In addition, the campers made their own dhishcups and listened to each other's heartbeat after different amounts of physical activity. Finally, they all worked together to create a "Heart Healthy" poster which was displayed at the retiring the Haddington Heart Smart dinner.

**Outdoor Activities**

Everyday of camp, the kids engaged in various outdoor games and activities to make sure they stayed physically active everyday. In addition to the classical games like dodgeball, jump rope, football, soccer, and tag, we had an egg hunt where the kids searched the outdoor property for eggs filled with various prizes. Towards the end of camp, we had a field day, where the campers were divided into two teams to compete over various competitions which included balloon toss, "Pass the Sponge", a water balloon fight, and a wheelbarrow race.

**Nutrition**

Each day, the children were provided with a balanced lunch and snack. In addition, once a week, they engaged in cooking their own main or snack which sometimes included ingredients from the local garden. Dishes included homemade ice cream, pizza, stir fried rice and fortune cookies, and cookies.

**Trips**

The campers went on two field trips throughout the summer. The first was the Palace Roller Skating Rink. Here, the kids were able to show off their various rollerblading skills as well as play games and win prizes. The second trip was to the Waterworks Museum by the Schuylkill River, where the children learned the history of the water pumping and filtering in Philadelphia and engaged in several interactive activities that demonstrated our daily use of water.

**Spelling Bee**

Each child was given a packet of words to practice at home. At least two times a week, children participated in spelling enhancing activities. We designed spelling games to help the children learn their words such as jeopardy and spelling races. After a few weeks, we picked the best spellers who will go to the Waterworks Museum where they learned even more about water.

**Money Smarts**

A Camp Bank was implemented throughout the summer where the children could earn "camp dollars" with good behavior and winning at games, and lose them for poor behavior. They could then use these dollars at the end of the week to buy from the "Camp Store" which included various games, toys, and apparel.

**Money SMARTS**

“``This past summer has been a truly enriching experience. We learned how to engage a variety of age groups in both educational and fun activities. We learned how to manage a large group of children and also developed personal relationships with each child. We learned that many of these children take what happens at home to camp and it’s not always pleasant. A child may be acting out because something traumatic has happened to them, not because they are a “bad kid”. We became aware of some of the disparities in healthcare as well. We saw how many of these children want someone to confide in and trust and we hope we served as that person for them, even if it was just for a short amount of time. Overall, this experience was extremely valuable and I hope to be able to use the lessons we learned in our future careers as doctors.”

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**EDUCATION AND THE ARTS**

**Arts and Crafts**

Children engaged in numerous arts and crafts activities. The children made their own bats that they could deposit “candy money” they earned throughout camp. Every child got a reusable bottle to use for their water. They designed it with markers and stickers. The children were also given a journal for writing time and get to design the cover. To go with the camp’s water theme, the kids made ocean marine life themed sand art, marine life backdrops, and stuffed paper fish. Additionally, the children made tie-dye t-shirts, tissue paper mosea mosaics, and silly putty.

**Reading and Journaling**

Reading and journaling were times for the children to decompress and reflect. Each child picked an age-appropriate book to read throughout camp for which they got to design their own bookmark. Twice a week, the children would read their book for 30 minutes. Many of the children could not wait to tell us what new thing happened in their story.

**Spelling Bee**

For journaling time, the children wrote in their journals for 30 minutes three times a week. Some of the topics they wrote about were ways they could be a healthy example for their families and friends, what they want to be when they grow up, fun things they are good at, if they could go back in time, where and when would they go and why, and how does crime in their neighborhood make them feel. The children really enjoyed journaling time and many came up with such unique entries. The journals were a way for the children to personally reflect and express their feelings through writing.

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**Project Outcomes**

- The children participated in one hour of physical activity outside each day. These activities encouraged children to think about the value of teamwork during group activities and the importance of daily exercise.
- The campers engaged in various educational and fun water themed activities. These activities led to an increased awareness of water conservation and how water is used in the campers’ daily lives. The Waterworks trip solidified this understanding because they actually got to see where and how water is used and why.
- Through making their own toothpaste, learning about how to correctly floss and brush their teeth and being educated about how teeth can decay, campers became more aware about oral hygiene and how to avoid dental decay.
- The campers took part in creating the heart healthy poster, making their own stethoscopes, and learning about cardiovascular health. These activities provided them with a greater awareness of poor eating choices and why eating right and exercising is important.
- Through the implementation of the Camp Bank and Camp Store, the campers learned valuable lessons on how to save money, how to earn money and what behaviors lead to losing money. The campers were engaged in counting their money each day. Each week at the Camp Store, many campers chose to save their money to be able to afford a better prize. These lessons in Money Smarts will help the children be more conscious of saving money.

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**Personal Statements**

“This summer has taught me what it truly means to be a strong educator to children and adolescents. Not only does careful and immense planning need to be involved to make sure the kids receive a fully enriching experience, but strong diligence must be used to manage the kids through the activities. This summer, I was also amazed by the services of Haddington Townhouses. To provide their residents with more than just housing and a safe engaging environment to send their children throughout their summer is truly remarkable. Working with the children and stage of Haddington was a great pleasure.”

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