1-1-2014

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Working it Out at Haddington Townhouses

Haddington Townhouses
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The Community Site
Haddington Townhouses, located in West Philadelphia, offers a youth summer enrichment program for children ages 7 to 13 who reside in the townhouses and community. It is under Better Tomorrows, a non-profit organization that provides social services to residents living at communities managed by Interstate Realty Management. Better Tomorrows’ core values are educational success, economic stability, health & wellness, and community strengthening. The mission of Better Tomorrows is to empower individuals, families, and neighborhoods to thrive.

Project Goals and Objectives
- To educate students about habits that are important to maintaining good health
- To incorporate interprofessional education into lessons prepared for the children
- To serve as potential role models for the children participating in the summer program
- To learn how health disparities in certain area of Philadelphia affect other aspects of children’s lives
- To promote health and literacy every day through various activities and lessons prepared by the Bridging the Gaps interns
- To provide a safe and fun environment for the children to learn

Interprofessionalism
The two Bridging the Gaps interns at this site used their knowledge as student healthcare professionals to observe and attempt to solve some of the resources that may be lacking in the community.
By integrating their knowledge from the core curriculum of each student’s school, they were able to identify potential barriers to care in underserved populations.

Activities
Oral Health:
The importance of oral health in relation to the health of the entire individual was discussed along with the anatomy and structure of the tooth, and the difference between permanent and primary (baby) teeth. Students made individual models of the mouth, which were used to illustrate along with educational books and fluoride tablets, where to brush and floss. Students were given toothbrushes, toothpaste and floss to take home with them.

Educational Advancement & Literacy:
Students wrote daily in journals on topics such as current events, personal progress in the program, environmentalism and career goals. Students were also encouraged to read daily using donated books or completed projects such as journal entries in addition to participating in a spelling bee involving other schools. In addition, students took an educational field trip to the Franklin Institute to understand human physiology of the heart, brain, circulatory system as well as scientific principles such as the phases of matter, pressure/volume relationship and aeronautics. Such topics were also illustrated in projects such as making volcanoes and launching rockets.

Heart Disease and Cardiovascular Health:
Students learned the anatomy of the heart and blood flow in the circulatory system. Environmental factors such as lifestyle choices, nutrition and exercise were incorporated into illustrating how heart disease occurs and develops. Lessons coincided with the children working on the Heart Smart Poster, where they drew food and activities which would benefit or harm the cardiovascular system.

Physical Activity and Fitness:
Students had 1 hour of outdoor activity every morning in which dodgeball, hula hooping, jumping rope, football, and dancing were favorites. In addition, the children were given extra time to practice dance routines for the on-site talent show. Small field trips were also taken such as walking to the local library, basketball courts and nearby farmer’s garden. Students were encouraged to engage in physical activity outside of the program as well to promote overall fitness and continue to build bones and strengthen muscles.

Nutrition and Weight Status:
Once a week the children were involved in cooking healthy meals involving simple ingredients, some of which came from the site’s vegetable patch. In addition, the children visited Neighborhood Farms to learn about growing food in a sustainable manner. Healthy lunches and snacks were also provided on a daily basis. Nutrition, physical activity and cardiovascular health were closely interrelated into the program’s curriculum.

Oral Health:

Haddington is Heart Healthy!

Literacy was highly encouraged through journals, spelling bee and reading. So the children were able to improve their reading and writing skills.
At least 2-3 hours of physical activity each week was included in the summer program. This reinforced the idea of staying in good shape, starting from a young age.

Project Outcomes
The children learned to be more confident. By discussing the things that happened in their community and talking about how they could change it, their outlook was slightly more positive.

They got to think more about life outside of their community by discussing the cultures of other countries.

They participated in the heart healthy poster which provided more knowledge about how to keep themselves and others around them more healthy.

Personal Statements
“I learned a lot in these few months as a BTG intern. I am honored to have met brilliant young children, many of whom are more resilient than most people. I am hoping to carry this wisdom forward with me in my efforts to become a better rounded healthcare provider and advocate.”
- Rachael Oyewole

“My time at Haddington has taught me to look beneath the surface for what is happening in the childrens’ lives and the community. We can’t offer help unless we understand what the underlying issues and influential factors are.”
- Aliya Shaikh

Acknowledgements
We would like to express our deepest appreciation to Ms. Cynthia Davis and Ms. Reba Cherry for all their support and guidance. The staff and educators at Haddington were also extremely helpful. We would also like to thank Joanne Behm for helping us throughout our experience.