

'Summer All Sports Camp' teaches kids healthy living habits

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
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Promoting wellness through the diabetes program to youth was the theme at the 2018 Summer All Sports Camp held during the week of June 11-15 at Rocky View Elementary.

The camp focused on various topics such as diabetes education, nutrition, physical activity and Navajo culture.

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Educating kids about diabetes was the primary goal along with emphasis on physical activities which entailed basketball, bicycling, soccer, and other forms of exercise that was offered to the children to make it fun for them – and it was free for children ages 7 to 18.

The event was funded by a diabetes grant. The undisclosed amount of the grant was funded for five years for schools in the service unit of Gallup.

According to Toni Nezz, school health coordinator for Gallup Indian Medical Center, this event was to set kids on the path towards healthy decisions to avoid diabetes.

“If we can prevent it from the beginning we can teach them about healthy habits and making good decision before the diabetes,” she said. “When they get older they’ll make better decisions and won’t go into that pre-diabetes mode and into diabetes. More money is spent on people who are diabetic and if we can spend more money on the pre-prevention, then we won’t get to that stage where they’re on medication, dialysis and all those other complications that go with it.”

This weeklong event along with the diabetes program was in partnership with the Gallup McKinley County Schools, which allowed the program to take place at Rocky View Elementary.

Coach Esco Chavez from Tobe Turpen Elementary taught the kids basic exercise skills.

Approached by Nezz to help, Chavez coached the afternoon session by teaching basketball drills and other physical activities such as soccer, volleyball, biking, jump roping, and talking with kids about health.

“We’re teaching the kids to just stay active through these sports and the kids are enjoying it and having fun,” Chavez said. “They never get tired (laughing) they enjoy it, they just love to go and go, it’s a lot of fun for them.”

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Senior community health workers from GIMC, Sheryl Morgan and Brianna Johnson, also assisted with the event by giving presentations on proper healthy habits.

"We're here to do a presentation for the kids on proper hand washing techniques and demonstrating it," Morgan, senior community health worker for the Twin Lakes community, said. "We gave out handouts and my co-worker taught on how to keep properly hydrated by drinking lots of fluids and eating lots of fruits when it gets hot. They really enjoyed it."

Lunch was provided by the summer feeding program along with other cool incentives for the kids. Backpacks with school supplies and T-shirts were given out and daily awards such as charm necklaces were awarded to attendees. Pocket size first-aid kits were handed out too.

Seven-year-old Aiden Thompson, who attends Rocky View Elementary, enjoyed the activities, especially basketball.

"I liked playing basketball and playing in a real game too," Thompson said.

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