



Beausejour Early Years School's Senior Buddies

Project Target Risk Factors:

Healthy Eating
Physical Activity
Mental Wellbeing

Target Population:

School age (6 -12 yrs)
Seniors (70+ yrs)

Project Leads:

Shannon Neustater and Heather Deneka, Beausejour Early Years School

Community: Beausejour

RHA: North Eastman

Project Partners:

North Eastman Health Association, Beausejour Early Years School, East Gate Lodge

Project Details: A multiple event / ongoing project

Description:

Students in Grades 1 to 4 met monthly with residents of East Gate Lodge (personal care home) to build relationships. The students prepare and share a healthy snack with their 'senior buddies'. Each month is designated a different theme. Activities like singing, crafts, and visits to the school go along with the healthy snack.

Time:

The project is done over 10 months, the length of the school year - with one snack and one visit per month.

Objectives:

- To promote healthy eating and snack ideas
- To build community and citizenship
- To increase the physical and social activity of both groups

Planning Supports:

Early Years School teachers have been taking children to visit the residents in the Lodge for a number of years. They were interested in making this a more regular practice. There was collaboration between the recreation department at the Lodge and the school team. Students researched healthy snacks and staff helped to find recipes that were appropriate for specific diet restrictions. They made a calendar of events listing activities, crafts and the snack of the month.

Results:

In the 2010 / 2011 school year there were 24 Grade 4 students and 20 Grade 1 students visiting 35+ Lodge residents.

Students have learned that healthy snacks also taste good. Students walk to the Lodge and down the long hallways at the Lodge. Students and residents have gotten to know each other and actively converse with each other. The seniors are smiling and more talkative when they are with the students.

What worked:

All participants benefited in many more ways than we anticipated!

Some of the benefits were:

- Students developed empathy, kindness, compassion and respect for the elderly
- The elderly looked forward to visits and talked about their relationships with the students long after they left.
- Students were highly engaged in conversations about life long ago.
- Snacks were delicious and easy to prepare.

What didn't work and any changes made:

There is a need for more proactive planning between both parties to accommodate the high numbers of students and seniors. There is limited space in the Lodge for physical activity when there are large numbers.

Unexpected Outcomes:

As above.

Other notes:

Students not only visited seniors at the lodge but invited seniors back to the school for a tea party and Christmas Concert.

Volunteers:

Parents and East Gate Lodge volunteers

Facilities:

East Gate Lodge Recreation Room and Beausejour Early Years School

Equipment:

Kitchen baking equipment, craft supplies, baking supplies

Other:

Groceries for snacks

Total Costs:

Healthy Together Now grant of \$360 plus \$100

Contact Information:

Community: Beausejour

Region: North Eastman

Contact person: Elizabeth Myles

Email address: emyles@sunrisesd.ca

An alternate contact or for information on other Healthy Together Now programs in this area please contact Bonnie Stefansson - bstefansson@neha.mb.ca