

Youth and Family Summer Activities

Created by UW-L ESS Fitness Majors

Summer 2009

Summer Activity!

On a walk through a typical American neighborhood this summer, one might be hard pressed to find children engaging in fort building, night game playing, and bike riding. As summer activities have become more sedentary and moved indoors, research has shown that many of today's children are actually gaining weight during the summer break. And as electronic entertainment replaces both structured and unstructured outdoor experiences, many children are not getting the necessary 60 minutes a day of physical activity. In an effort to reverse this devastating trend, this newsletter was created to provide parents and their children with a wealth of opportunities for fun physical activity during the summer.



Youth Events – Promoting Physical Activities through Community Agencies

By: Amy Kempen

1st Annual YMCA/Dahl Automotive Kid's Tri

When: Saturday, July 11, 2009

Where: North (Onalaska) YMCA

The children of the Coulee Region can participate in two unique, challenging and rewarding events this summer. The YMCA and Dahl Automotive have teamed up to hold the 1st Annual YMCA/Dahl Automotive Kid's Tri on Saturday, July 11, 2009. These motivated youngsters will swim, bike, and run age appropriate distances. Participants will also

receive a t-shirt, a finisher's medal as well as a bag full of goodies. Early Bird Registration - before May 29th - \$10, May 30th to July 3rd - 15\$ and July 4th to July 8th - \$20. Children must be ages 5-14 to participate.



YMCA/Bronston Kids Marathon “Keeping Kids in Motion”.

When: Saturday, August 1st - Saturday,
September 26th

Where: La Crosse Area YMCA

Kids can also stay active this summer by participating in the 5th Annual YMCA/Bronston Kids Marathon “Keeping Kids in Motion”. Starting Saturday August 1st kids will begin an 8 week “training” in which they will accumulate 25.2 miles with their last mile held at the YMCA's Maple Leaf Road Races, Saturday September 26th! To keep children excited, interested and devoted to the program, the YMCA will be holding group running times in addition to sending out weekly informative letters discussing the importance of healthy eating habits and physical activity. What better way to develop a strong commitment to physical activity than through a program that encourages cumulative participation on a weekly basis!

Youth and Family Activities – Fostering Deeper Family Bonds through Outdoor Adventure

By: Laura Nelson

Public Beaches

Wisconsin has such an incredible array of things to offer for beach and water lovers. Better yet, many of these beaches are here in La Crosse County. Black River Public Beach has so many enjoyable youth and family activities on hand. Outdoor recreation is plentiful; activities include swimming, playing beach volleyball, hiking, and camping.

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Pettibone Beach never disappoints either. It too has several campsites available and offers public beach access. Beaches are great places to toss foam rubber ball Frisbees and play with beach balls. These activities may seem simple, but they are great way to promote physical activity among families and when performed in the water, they can be very challenging.



Parks and Nature Centers

We sometimes disregard the beauty in our own backyard. The Coulee region is often referred to “God’s Country” for a specific reason; its landscape is dolloped with rolling hills, miles of forested valleys, water ways waiting to be traversed and bluffs that beckon to the climber. It is, nevertheless, perfect for youth and families who enjoy being active outdoors.

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

Mississippi River, Onalaska

This refuge is a wonderland for youth and their families. Attractions along the La Crosse County shore of the river encourage physical activity including canoeing and kayaking. Long Lake and Goose Island canoe trails contain different observation points at major pull-offs that are distinctly denoted with signs. Canoes and kayaks can be rented throughout La Crosse including at Three Rivers Outdoors and the UW-L Outdoor Connection. Go enjoy a day on the river!

Goose Island Park and Campground

Hwy. 35, South of La Crosse

Located on a wooded island in the Mississippi River, this park and campground is unsurpassed in Wisconsin. The island offers camping, fishing, nature trails, swimming, canoeing, bird watching, and waterfowl hunting.

Veteran’s Memorial Park

Route 1, West Salem

Situated between the La Crosse River and the Sparta/La Crosse Bike Trail, this park is a perfect location for engaging in physical activity. Youth and families are provided with recreational activities that include canoeing, biking, and hiking. This area is also a prime spot for engaging in group sports. There are three baseball diamonds, a volleyball court as well as the only outdoor shuffleboard court around!

Hixon Forest Nature Center

2707 Quarry Rd., La Crosse

Youth and families can enjoy hiking through this 720-acre preserve and view the interpretive exhibits the center offers. The interpretive exhibit is open Monday - Friday 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., weekends, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Great River & La Crosse River Bike Trails

These trails provide a variety of scenery and an overall unique experience. Throughout the easy-riding railroad grade bike trails, youth and families will encounter wildlife, forests, prairies, rare and endangered plants, birds, mammals and reptiles, locks and dams. A trail pass is needed if you intend on biking. However, children under the age of 16 can use the trail for free.

Physical Activity During the Summer

May Not Be What We Expect

By: Laura Nelson

The health and physical fitness of youth in America is fast approaching a crisis stage. While physical activity is continuously being withdrawn from academic programs, children are also participating in less vigorous exercise, summertime included! As a result, researchers have started to look at ways students spend their summer holidays. A group of 1289 boys and girls from third, fifth, seventh and ninth through twelfth grade were observed. These children attended schools located in urban and rural areas. The results showed students did not engage in sufficient amounts of physical activity during the summer. Instead of riding their bicycles or playing outdoor games, they spent a large amount of time watching TV and playing video games. While they did engage in some organized sport activity, it was very inconsistent and relatively short. The students; however, complained that the school did not provide adequate physical activity programs during the summer holidays suggesting a need to look at summer programs promoting physical activity for youth. As a parent, perhaps we should consider finding multiple ways to encourage our children to be more active in the summer time.

Stihec, J., & Strel, J. (1998, June). Analysis of the way primary and secondary school students in the Republic of Slovenia spend their summer holidays. *Kinesiology*, 30(1), 14-21.

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Youth and Family Events - Facilitating Physical Fitness through Family Connections

By: Jared Weymier

1st Annual Youth Outdoor Fest

When: July 18, 2009

Where: Pettibone Lagoon

Appealing to local hikers, campers, boaters, and fishermen/women, this festival is anchored by area businesses and non-profit groups to provide an informational fun-filled day in the outdoors! This unique event is geared toward youth and families that are interested in learning more the various outdoor activities available in the Seven Rivers region. Specifically, there will be demonstrations, hand-outs, entertainment and food. Come out and participate in fun hands-on activities for everyone in the outdoor corridors!

Admission – FREE!

Float Night at Erickson Pool

When: Thursday, June 18th; Thursday July 16th; Thursday Aug. 6th from 5:30-8:00p.m.

Where: Erickson Pool

Join other water lovers for an awesome night of water fun! Families will be able to participate in different games and contests, drink root beer floats, and wade in the water using different flotation devices!

Admission - \$2.00 for youth, \$3.00 for adults

Family Kayaking

**When: Friday Nights from 6:00 p.m. -
8:00 p.m.**

Where: Pettibone Lagoon

According to the latest statistics, kayaking is one of the fastest growing outdoor sports activities in the United States today. Kayaking is especially attractive for people with families offering an easy way to get everyone together. In addition, it offers affordable equipment and relatively easy instruction. Take advantage of the opportunities to kayak offered right here in La Crosse at the Pettibone Lagoon! The beauty of the family kayaking experience is that it helps to bring families together to focus on accomplishing common goals.



Youth and Teen Wellness Programs –

Enhancing Social, Emotional, and Physical Well-Being among Children

By: Kelly Kalinowski

Winning Weighs for Teens (See Attached Copy for Specific Times, Dates and Locations)

Gunderson Lutheran and Winning Weighs offers a comprehensive fitness and wellness program, for youth and teens ages 14-18, that is committed to providing access to resources, tools, and information for improving a youth or teen's quality of life. Winning Weighs for Teens and the YMCA have come together to provide 6 nutrition sessions led by Registered Dietitians of Gunderson Lutheran Medical Center and 6 physical activity sessions led by YMCA instructors at the YMCA-La Crosse over a period of six weeks. It is an opportunity for children to take advantage of special classes, clinics and workshops to find out how much FUN fitness and good health can be!



Introduction to Teen Strength Training

**(See Attached Copy for Specific Times,
Dates and Locations)**

Despite evidence of poor strength levels in children, the idea of children participating in strength and resistance training programs has gained little support. Nonetheless, research has shown that youth resistance training is effective in developing muscular strength and endurance. At the same time proper instruction is essential to prosperous performance. This is why the YMCA has created a class to introduce teens to their Wellness Center and the basic principles of strength training. Class participants will learn the proper use of specific machines, free weights, stability and medicine balls and cardio equipment. The YMCA instructors are dedicated to providing a safe and fun experience. Participants must be 12 years of age. If participants attend each session they will be granted access to the Wellness Center by themselves.

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Creating Opportunity Regardless of Ability

Summer Camps

By: Laura Nelson

With summer comes swimming, camping, and playing sports and many other activities. However, for children with chronic or terminal illnesses, it can be difficult to engage in these activities. Likewise parents often have a hard time finding summer camps that welcome children with disabilities and offer the medical attention they need. Just recently there has been a rise in specialized summer camps that offer children with different conditions a wide variety of opportunities. One of special interest is Stanley Stamm Summer Camp in Seattle, Washington. Here children engage in a wide variety of activities from horse back riding to swimming. It strives to meet the specific needs of every child; doctors, nurses, and non-medical volunteers travel across the country to help care for these campers. Dr. Rob Roskin who has been volunteering at the camping for 15 years stated, "Seeing how much the kids love camp is the most rewarding part of volunteering to me."

Regardless of ability level, selecting a camp can be very stressful for both the parent and the child. It is very beneficial to create list of care taking priorities and goals before deciding on a specific camp. Also, allow your child to play an active role in the decision making process because he or she is ultimately the one attending the camp. Some places to search for camps include Kidsamps.com and Acacamps.org which provide camp directories. Likewise consider parent-to-parent networks, word-of-mouth and physicians for advice and information. Specialized summer camps that accurately meet the array of needs and desires of children with chronic or terminal illnesses increase the quality of life for both the children and their families!

Neff, J. M. (2009, March). Specialized Summer Camps Provide Benefits for Children and Families Alike. *Exceptional Parent*, (3), 34-36. Retrieved April 10, 2009, from CINAHL Plus database.

Health and Wellness for Youth with Disabilities

(See Attached Copy for Specific Times and Dates)

Physical activity can have a huge impact on the quality of life for a child with a disability. In an effort to promote physical activity amongst all populations, the YMCA has created a program exclusively for children with special needs. Youth will be exposed to cardio equipment, specific machines and free weights along with discussions on nutrition. Furthermore, the YMCA staff will develop a program tailored specifically to the individual's needs. What an exciting program that encourages physical activity for children with ALL abilities!!

Opportunities Close to Home

Camp Shriver

When: July 20-24, 2009 from 8a.m.-5p.m.

Where: Green Island Park

By: Amy Kempen

Special Olympics Wisconsin and the City of La Crosse Parks & Recreation have paired up to offer this unique week long camp. The camp is offered to children ages 5-12 both with and without special needs. Campers will be paired up with a 'buddy' with each pair including one camper with special needs and one without. In the morning, the children will participate in many physical activities including basketball, bocce ball, soccer, badminton, kickball, ultimate frisbee, dodge ball, and whiffle ball. A nutrition talk, followed by a wholesome lunch will follow. By the afternoon each day, children will be transported to various field trips throughout the area. These trips include stops at: Horse Sense for Special Riders, North American Squirrel Association (an organization that provides accessibility to outdoor activities), All Star Lands, UW-L ropes courses and climbing walls, Pettibone Park, and Erickson Pool. This camp provides a great environment for children with and children without special needs to interact and learn from each other.





Youth Sports – Promoting Sportsmanship by Encouraging Teamwork and Fair Play

By: Jared Weymier

The YMCA as well as the La Crosse Parks and Recreation Department are offering several exciting youth sports leagues and camps this summer. Specifically the La Crosse Parks and Recreation will be offering different opportunities to participate in baseball, softball, swimming and tennis. The YMCA is holding several youth sports programs including: basketball, baseball, kickball, racquetball, gymnastics, dance and swimming.

Youth and Teen Performance Training Programs – Developing Sound Skill through Specific Practice Preparation Youth and Teen Performance Training Program

By: Amy Kempen

UW-L Mitchell Hall (See Attached Copy for Specific Times and Dates)

Youth, do you have high aspirations to compete at a high level? Do you love a challenge? If so, this new and improved performance training program is just for you! The performance training program is designed for all athletes and will focus on proper technique, conditioning, speed, strength, agility and injury prevention. UW-L Strength Center Director and USA Running Coach, Dennis Kline, has designed a youth specific training program centered on strength, speed and agility, Olympic lifts and plyometrics. All sessions will be held at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's Mitchell Hall.

Conclusion

La Crosse, Wisconsin will not disappoint anyone who is looking for fun and exciting physical activity during the summer. While this area does offer a wide variety of structured programs, its landscape enables children and families to engage in exercise by exploring the outdoors providing multiple opportunities for physical activity during the summer. Increasing physical activity is the start to paving a way to overall health and wellness. We encourage you to utilize the vast resources in the La Crosse area and find an activity that everyone can enjoy!



Composed by: Kelly Kalinowski, Amy Kempen, Laura Nelson and Jared Weymier

University of Wisconsin - La Crosse
Exercise and Sport Science - Fitness
Undergraduate Students

Registration Information

City of La Crosse Parks and Recreation

Summer Registration Dates

Saturday May 16, 2009

Residents register from 8:00a.m.- 9:30a.m.
Non-residents register from 9:30am-10:30am.
After these time periods, registration will be opened online on Saturday, May 16, at 12:00 p.m.

Registration will be held at the Parks and Recreation Office located on the first floor of City Hall (400 La Crosse Street).

YMCA - La Crosse and North

Summer Registration Dates

June 8 - 12

Hours: Walk-in & On-line: 7:00 a.m.- 9 p.m.;
Phone-in: 9:00a.m. - 9:00p.m.;
Open registration: 8:00a.m. - 9p.m.

Mon, June 8 Family & Adult Members

Tues, June 9 Family, Youth & Adult Members

Wed-Friday, June 10 - 12 Open Registration

Summer Classes begin Monday, June 15 and end Saturday, August 9

Winning Weights for Teens

YMCA-La Crosse: (6 weeks)

When: Mon & Wed; June 15-July 22

Time: 2:00p.m. - 3:00p.m.

Where: 1st Floor Multi Purpose Room

Fee: Members - \$140; Non-members - \$180

Health and Wellness for Youth with Disabilities

YMCA-North: Summer Session

When: Tue & Thur; 1:00 p.m. - 2 p.m.

Where: Wellness Center

Fee: Members \$25

Non - members \$34

Introduction to Teen Strength Training

YMCA-La Crosse: (2 weeks)

When: Monday -Thursday; July 6-9

Time: 9 a.m. - Noon

OR Mon AND Wed; July 20, 22, 27, 29

Time: 4:00 p.m. - 7 p.m.

YMCA-North: (2 weeks)

When: Tues AND Thur; June 16, 18, 23 & 25

Time: 9 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

OR Mon -Thur; July 13-16

Time: 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Where: Wellness Center

Fee: Family Members - \$38; Youth Members - \$49

Youth Sports Performance Training

UW-L Mitchell Hall

Who: Boys & Girls entering 7-12 grade

Participants grouped according to age and/or skill.

When: Mon, Wed & Fri: June 15 - August 7

Time: 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m., 9:15 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. OR 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Fee: Family Member - \$170.00

Youth Member - \$180.00

Community Participants - \$190.00

*An additional 50% discount is offered to YMCA family members for each additional child enrolled in the program.

References

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"Summer and Fall 2009 Activity Guide." *City of LaCrosse Parks and Recreation*. 02 FEB 2009. 20 Apr 2009 <<http://www.cityoflacrosse.org/DocumentView.asp?DID=1961>>.

"2009 Spring/Summer Program Guide." *La Crosse Area Family YMCA*. 02 MAR 2009. 20 Apr 2009

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