

Community



Youths in the Summer Enrichment through Fun Activities Program take time out from their lessons and play.



A group of youngsters talks to a Winston-Salem police officer who is on patrol in the downtown area.

Youths Have Fun and Learn, Too, In Summer Enrichment Program

By SABBINA JONES
Chronicle Staff Writer

To succeed in today's society, children and teen-agers must acquire the self-discipline and social skills necessary to achieve their potential.

This is where the Summer Enrichment through Fun Activities Program comes in, said Courtney Saunders, the program's director.

Saunders said the educational project began in August 1992 as a program sponsored by the Outreach Center in coordination with the YWCA. Funded by a three-year \$243,000 grant from the Kate Biting Poor and Needy Trust Foundation, the program had three initiatives: to help parents develop better relationships with their children; to aid parents in preparing their 4-year-olds for kindergarten through Project Home Start; and a program to aid teen-age mothers, called Practical Life Skills Building.

Children were also offered membership in the Marching Angels and Marching 100s, marching bands for children ages 4-11 and 12-20, respectively.

The teen-agers participated in an after-school homework program. Soon the parents requested that the homework program also be made available to the younger children. Since there were not enough parents to supervise the children, the teen-agers were matched with the children as tutors. On June 14, the Summer Enrichment through Fun Activities Program was enacted as an outgrowth of Project Home Start.

Created specifically for children ages 4-11 with disciplinary problems and below-average grades, the program teams the younger participants with teen-age tutors daily. Parents are required to volunteer during the week and to participate in a daily reading activity with their children.

"There is a need here in the community," Saunders said. "A lot of kids would be home this summer with a teen. The teens are raising

them anyway."

The program has 35 teen-age volunteers who learn valuable job skills while being role models for the children.

"It gives them the opportunity to develop self-responsibility and they can give back to the community," Saunders said.

"I help out the little children and get good job experience," said Amar King, 13, a volunteer. "It's fun. It's like on-the-job training."

Dee Hawkins, 18, volunteers because he enjoys being with children.

"It has helped me to grow up some and learn about the kids," he said. "It's fun being with the kids."

The children will benefit from the program by acquiring social discipline skills, manners, respect, self-esteem and an improvement in schoolwork, said Saunders.

In the morning, the children participate in activities that improve their math, reading and writing skills, their ability to follow directions and their social skills. Then they make crafts during their free time, and the reading activity follows in the afternoon. Since the program has no transportation, the children will go on walking tours in the community in lieu of field trips.

Other available programs include the Mathematical Achievers Program, which uses volunteers to tutor 6th- through 10th-graders in general math, pre-algebra, algebra I, geometry and algebra II on Mondays and Wednesdays. A reading program called "Smart Meal" for black males, ages 13-20, began last Thursday.

The program has at least 150 children enrolled and will end on Aug. 20. It is located in the Empowering Family Center at 610 N. Liberty St. During the school year, the program will be changed to an after-school format that will keep data on the participants from three to five years, depending on their ages.

"No one place can take care of all of our ills," Saunders said. "All of us have to work together."

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