

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OUTDOOR EDUCATION INTERNSHIP ARAPAHOE COUNTY

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PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The internship focused on the development and delivery of youth educational programming centered around outdoor, environmental, and natural resource education. I provided program planning, implementation, and evaluation of youth educational events and have worked closely with the 4-H staff to implement summer programming at our Urban Ranchers Camp, the Arapahoe County Fair, Buckley Space Force Base, Clayton Elementary School, and other community events.

INTERNSHIP GOALS

I applied to this internship because I believed it would help shape me into a better educator and researcher; I know I would not be where I am without the individuals and organizations invested in my learning and development. Ultimately, I desired a hands-on experience with stakeholders in my community in order to make a valuable difference. I was confident this internship would provide me those opportunities, and it did!

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO MY EDUCATION

As a Communication Studies PhD student and current instructor dedicated to the improvement of my community, I was eager to assist in the development and implementation of summer programming for youth in Arapahoe County. Throughout my academic career, I have grown increasingly passionate to learn more about the creation of meaningful resources that will enhance the lives and education of students. I want to continue to be an educator within Colorado, and through this internship, I was able to invest in the students of my community.

WHAT I DID

In addition to assisting with the development and implementation of youth-oriented community events, my main task was to create youth programming that volunteers connected with Open Spaces could utilize to enhance student’s understanding of the natural environment in our communities. I developed a collection of activities suited for K-9 students. The example below shows one of the activities from the complete resource activity guide.

Youth Outdoor Education Activities

Arapahoe County 4-H

“Pollution Search”

Location: Outdoor (Can be modified for indoor)
Ages: Grades 1-8
Time: 1 hour
Materials:

- Small notebooks (one for each student or pair of students)
- Pencils
- Classroom whiteboard OR Large poster sheet & marker
- Instructor discussion info sheet
- (Optional) Pollution coloring worksheet--Ideal for younger students

Prep:

- Restock materials
- Print out instructor discussion info sheet
- (Optional) Print out pollution coloring worksheets

Object: Students will identify forms of pollution (air, land, water) and describe the effects that various pollutants can have on people, wildlife, and plants. Students will be able describe relationships between various forms of pollution and human actions.

1. Ask students to describe what life might be life without clean air or water.
2. Have students brainstorm pollutants. Discuss/refresh types of pollution (air, land, water) (See instructor info sheet).
3. Outdoors, preferably along water, have students in pairs or individually go on a walk to look for and record pollution in their notebooks. Encourage them to use all senses (sight, smell, hear).
 - As they record each pollutant, have them explain/discuss with each other what kinds of plants/animals could be affected by them.
 - Additionally, have them discuss/note how the pollutant could have got there.
 - Have them draw pictures to record if they like.
4. Bring students back together and on whiteboard/large poster sheet create categories: LAND, AIR, WATER **OR** SIGHT, SMELL, HEAR. Have them sort their observations into the categories.
5. **Debrief:** After chart is complete, and depending on the level of students, debrief with following questions:
 - Do any of the same items appear in different categories? If so, do you agree with where those items were places? Can something pollute two different things, such as air and water or land and water?
 - Can we always see, hear, or smell pollution?
 - Which examples might affect people’s health? What about plant and animal health? How?
6. **Optional:** For younger students, have them color/identify the pollutants on the pollution coloring worksheet

Indoor Variation: Instead of taking students on a walk, print off pictures that show various types of pollution. Have students categorize the pictures according to the types of pollution.

Source: Modified from Project Learning Tree, “Pollution Search,” p. 153-158

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WHAT I LEARNED

This internship has provided me with hands-on learning opportunities focusing on communication skills, teamwork, successful work habits, critical thinking and problem solving, professional resiliency and adaptability, and developing partnerships with community organizations and leaders. Overall, the internship has been an excellent opportunity for me to learn transferable skills related program and curriculum development, delivery, and evaluation. Below you can see one of the activities I developed being implemented at the Arapahoe County Fair.



IMPACT

The impact that Claudia and the entire Arapahoe County 4-H team has on the community is evident; because of them, we are able to make sure students are learning and growing as leaders, community members, and critical thinkers throughout the summer and school year. From art camps to STEM programs, the students are gaining tools that will help them for the rest of their lives.