Bigfoot Inspires Youth: Preparing Staff to Teach Leave No Trace in Urban Afterschool Programs

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Background
Increasing affinity for nature in urban youth—this is one of the goals of a partnership between the YMCA and Old Dominion University. This session will unpack the training module that prepared staff to lead Leave No Trace education programs in Norfolk-area YMCA afterschool programs, including details about how the Youth Outcomes Battery is framing the year-long initiative. Attendees will leave with a digital toolkit including the resources to facilitate the training in their own program.

Old Dominion University and The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics wanted to gain more knowledge on urban youth and their environmental stewardship. Old Dominion University’s partnership with the YMCA’s after-school program at Larchmont Elementary school in Norfolk, Virginia, was a suitable setting for the study because of the diverse urban youth. Leave No Trace’s Bigfoot’s Playbook is a great resource to help increase the outdoor environmental stewardship of urban youth. The activities in Bigfoot’s Playbook help explain outdoor ethics to youth. After participating in the activities, youth should have a better understanding of how to use the outdoors responsibly.

To help introduce Leave No Trace and the Bigfoot’s Playbook activities a 90-minute training session was created for the college students. The college students will be given a 30-minute power point presentation on the basics about Leave No Trace. After the presentation, the college students will then participate in three activities from Bigfoot’s Playbook lasting 30-minutes. Next the college students facilitated three Bigfoot’s Playbook activities selected from a list, rounding out the 90-minute training. This training session better prepared them to then lead urban youth in outdoor activities during the afterschool partnership.
Evaluation
Leave No Trace’s Bigfoot’s Playbook activities were assessed using the American Camp Association’s Youth Outcome Battery. The two subscales used from the Youth Outcome Battery basic version were Affinity for Nature (5-item) and Responsibility (7=6-item). Additional subscales on Pro-social Behavior (4-items) and LNT (2-items) were also used.

Contacts
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