

5th Larne Guides NICHI Small Grants Project

“The Time of Your Life.....Wise and Well!!”

5th Larne Guides & Senior Section, females aged between 10 and 18 years of age who are still in full time education, from a variety of religious and social backgrounds took part in the NICHI Small Grants Project

The girls received information and practical experience of a variety of factors which influence your health, and have been armed with the key skills to help them to lead a healthier lifestyle, therefore empowering them to put the words in to action.

All the girls really enjoyed the programme of activities which this Grant provided, and, as would be expected, there were differing opinions about what the best bit of the programme was, what the worst bit was, what they would like to do again and what they would do differently next time.

A lot of the girls enjoyed the Nutrition Session, and found the information provided regarding the effects of certain minerals & vitamins on their bodies, and the influence of these on their hormones etc. very beneficial. They also really enjoyed making and trying Quinoa salad, although were not as keen on the chocolate alternative!

By completing the programme, the girls have acquired a sound basis of knowledge regarding the importance of exercise and healthy eating and how together they can combat obesity. They have also learnt how diet and exercise can affect their skin and what they can do to counteract this, using natural ingredients found in the home.

The girls are also armed with information regarding the effects of alcohol, drugs and smoking on the body, therefore empowering them to resist peer pressure regarding these temptations as they get older.

By trying various forms of exercise, from Zumba to trampolining to a simple walk in a Forest Park, the girls have realised that exercise can, not only be free, but it can also be great fun, and that sometimes it just takes the courage to try something different, to be able to find the type of exercise which best suits you!

The finale of our project was our overnight to Gosford Guide House, set in Gosford Forest Park. This was a brilliant overnight, where the girls planned and cooked healthy, nutritious meals, as well as trampolining in We Are Vertigo (somewhere a lot of them had never been to) and taking a very pleasant walk around the Forest Park (which was a highlight for many of the girls). During this time away, we further consolidated everything that had been learnt during the project, while building strong bonds of friendship!

There were many highlights during the project, and when asked during the evaluation, the girls all picked different highlights-for some it was the nutrition session, for some the Zumba, the trampolining and for some it was the walk around Gosford Forest Park-some even particularly enjoyed trying avocado!!

However, what was apparent during it all, was the increased sense of belonging the girls all developed within the unit, by working together during the sessions and having fun together while participating in all the different activities, they realised that being healthy, and making good choices doesn't have to be boring!

We found that we had to deliver the Peer Educator session regarding the effects of alcohol, drugs and smoking in 2 separate groups-an older group and a younger group. We found we could not pitch the session at a level which was appropriate to both groups at the same time-areas which we could cover with the older girls would have been inappropriate for the younger girls, so we decided to split the session so that all age groups received the most relevant and appropriate information possible.

Without a doubt this has been a very enjoyable, successful and beneficial project, which has highlighted the importance of making healthy choices, and that it is within your power to make these choices- no matter what age you are. It is an area which both the girls and leaders feel we could explore further in the future if funding were available to help develop the basic knowledge acquired during this programme.



