



The 2011 Annual Program Report

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We Had a Great Time in 2011



Introduction

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his report will focus on the changes in programs in 2011. The 2010 annual program report reviews the objectives, mission, and general organizational plan for the Good Neighbors programs. The 2010 report is found in the reports section of the SML Good Neighbors website at: www.smlgoodneighbors.org.

This was a big year for SML Good Neighbors as we expanded our programs to serve more children. Every year since the first enrichment camp in 2008, we have discovered new ways to work with the kids, made additions to the program to make it more exciting for the kids, and included activities that nurture their social and intellectual development. The 2011 experience was no exception; it was very successful and gave us even more ideas that will be incorporated in the 2012 program.

The major changes in 2011 related to the Summer Enrichment Day Camps. This is the largest of the three (3) programs Good Neighbors provides. The next sections describe all three 2011 programs—*In-School Mentoring Program, Summer School Sack Lunch and Weekend Backpack Program and the Summer Enrichment Day Camp Program*.

In-School Mentoring Program

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he In-School Mentoring Program continued in two schools—Dudley Elementary School in Franklin County and Moneta Elementary School in Bedford County. Good Neighbors volunteers work out flexible schedules with the principals and teachers and work with children on any activities assigned. This may be in reading, math, social studies or other areas where a child needs special assistance. The number of volunteers has increased to an average of 12 and more could be used. This is a low-profile program, but the principals and teachers rely on, and appreciate, this extra assistance. In this time of budget concerns, volunteer assistance is truly needed.

Summer School Sack Lunch and Weekend Backpack Program

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his program began in 2007 and remains part of the SML Good Neighbors programs. The scheduling is complicated because the two counties have different schedules. The volunteers who manage this program also provide the feeding program and backpacks for the two day camps. In Franklin County, we do not provide sack lunches to summer school students since this is provided by another organization. However, we do provide weekend backpacks during the two weeks of summer school to children at Burnt Chimney, Dudley and Windy Gap Elementary Schools. Bedford County has three weeks of summer school and Good Neighbors provides sack lunches to students at Body Camp, Huddleston and Moneta Elementary Schools. Summer school meets just four days per week. The sack lunches are given to Good Neighbors by Feed the Children at no cost. Our volunteers pick up the lunches in Rocky Mount each day and deliver

them to the schools. Feed the Children is part of a USDA funded summer feeding program. This is the first year our lunches for summer school have been provided by Feed the Children. In the past we have purchased our food from Feed America (formerly SW Virginia Second Harvest). However, we have had a relationship with Feed the Children since the Good Neighbors program began. They provide all of our breakfast and lunch food for the two four-week camps. In Bedford County, we also provide the summer school students with weekend backpacks. The backpacks have food for the weekend and a new book each week. Backpack food is purchased through Shop Rite grocery.

The feeding programs require many volunteers. Each week, approximately 20 volunteers work with Colleen McNulty to pickup and deliver lunches and pack and deliver backpacks. As will be seen later in this report, the amount of food handled is huge. And the schedules are very difficult to manage. Franklin County has a two week summer school; Bedford County has a summer school that meets for three weeks; these overlap with the Summer Day Camps that meet four weeks in Franklin County and then four weeks in Bedford County. And the distances traveled to pick up and deliver to the six schools served are huge; this is one of the challenges of delivering programs like the Good Neighbors programs in a rural area.

The Four-Week Summer Enrichment Day Camps

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Although the general format for the day camps was similar to past years, there were numerous additions and revisions in the program. It was a great summer and the lessons learned will be used to plan an even better program for 2012.

The Major Additions for 2011:

We added 5th and 6th graders—

This was the first summer that we had 5th and 6th graders. Up to this time, the children were rising 1st through 4th graders. Many children—and their families—who had been in the camps in previous years and were “aging out” asked if we could add something for older kids. A task

group met to consider this option and there was unanimous agreement that we should add a 5th and 6th grade group for former campers. The task group included: Lisa Bowman, principal at Dudley Elementary School, Barbara Rezzonico, principal at Moneta Elementary School, Jim Mullens, board member with Good Neighbors and former administrator with the Franklin County schools, Chris Brinckerhoff, retired special education teacher and a volunteer and consultant with SML Good Neighbors, Shearer Rumsey, camp director, and Russell Baskett, program director. A review of the 2010 database indicated that approximately 40 children were in this category, 20 from each county. The report and recommendations of this task group was sent to the board of directors. It was accepted and approved.

These older students were sent a special invitation to return to camp as part of this new program. Thirty (30) children participated in this new program; 19 at the Franklin County camp and 11 at the Bedford County camp. Overall, this was successful. During the first camp (Franklin) we learned that our program planning for these kids was not adequate. Additionally, we had a small number of kids who had behavioral issues that challenged us. These lessons guided our planning for the Bedford camp. The 5th and 6th grade program at this camp functioned much smoother, and more effectively.

Planning for the Bedford camp included new and different activities for these older kids. For example, they designed and published a newsletter about camp that was given to families, volunteers and published in the good Neighbors Newsletter. This experience is guiding the planning for the 2012 5th and 6th grade programs.

We added two (2) more interns—

The addition of the 5th and 6th grade group required adding two additional interns. We always assign two interns to each group of kids. And, we try to keep the maximum size of each group at 20. With the addition of the older kids we worked with four groups of kids. Not only did we add 5th and 6th graders, but the 1st through 4th grade participants also increased. In general terms, we had approximately 60 children who were rising 1st through 4th graders and 20 who were rising 5th and 6th graders at each camp. The total attendance in 2011 was 161.

About the intern selection process—

The internship program grows more competitive each year. This year we had positions for eight interns and we could have easily accepted twice that number. Of all the students in the applicant pool, only two did not fit the criteria of the selection committee. The committee members for 2011 were: Shearer Rumsey, Judy Wolfe, Russ Baskett, Elizabeth Brown and Megan Hope. We specifically recruited interns who were Bonner Leaders, Bonner Scholars or Honors Program students. For information about the Bonner programs check the Bonner Foundation website. The 2011 interns came to us from Lynchburg College, Ferrum College, Guilford College,

the University of Richmond and Virginia Tech. We were fortunate to have experienced interns returning. Elizabeth Brown returned as the lead intern, and Megan Hope, who was with us in 2009, also returned. Additionally, Angela Massino returned for the second camp when one of the new interns left the program at the end of the first camp. Angela was also an intern in 2009 and 2010.

We added a fresh fruit and vegetable program—

With the support of funding by the SML Rotary, we provided fresh fruits and vegetables for the children. These were used to supplement lunches as needed and snacks at the end of the day. This program was coordinated by Sue Backer who worked with local growers and some groceries to get donations of produce when possible, or to purchase at reasonable prices. Sue and other volunteers prepared the produce at the camps. The kids ate almost everything we provided. It was amazing to see them eat zucchini strips—we thought they would resist. But, it always helped to provide ranch dressing. Actually, we had so much zucchini that Sue recruited several volunteers to bake zucchini bread for the kids. Again, they loved it! She also made homemade apple sauce that was a hit. We did learn one important lesson this year. We cannot cook foods in our homes and bring them to camp for the kids to consume. This is not permitted by the Department of Health. So, beginning in 2012, all cooking will be done at the schools with the assistance of a school nutritionist. Sue prepared a detailed report and recommendations about this program. It is an appendix at the end of this report. The fresh fruit and vegetable program will be a standard part of the program; it was considered to be a valuable and healthy addition to the program.

The Major Changes or Revisions for 2011:

Nature Education included a fieldtrip to the SML State Park—

This year the nature education enrichment week concluded with a full-day fieldtrip to the State Park. Shearer Rumsey, the camp director, is an environmental educator. She has worked in that capacity at the SML State Park. The children were taken by county school buses to the park and, among other things, hiked the regular trails, as well as game trails in the park. The highlight was wading in a small stream and netting or capturing a diversity of aquatic animal life. The animals were studied, identified and released back in to the stream. It was a great natural laboratory for teaching aquatic ecology. Because there were 80 kids, it required the hard work and full attention of all eight interns and several volunteers to shepherd and teach the kids. It required a lot of planning, work and coordination. But, it was a very big success. Shearer's report is in the appendices.

The Peace Education Week included a fieldtrip to *Unbridled Change*—

This was the second year we have included Unbridled Change in the Peace Education enrichments. The objectives of this experience include: learning cooperative problem solving, team-building, settling differences without psychological or physical violence, listening to others, sharing responsibilities and modeling Good Neighbors values. This program uses horses as subjects for the various tasks or assignments the groups of kids are given. There is no riding. It is amazing to see how quickly a group of kids learns to work together to get a horse to follow a particular path through an obstacle course. Although they don't analyze what happens, they experience leadership styles that do and don't work. They see that a team working together can accomplish a task with a horse that an aggressive individual cannot accomplish. In addition to the assigned challenges with horses, each group of kids also has other special activities during the day. Each child gets experience "grooming" a horse, each group has an arts and crafts activity and each group has a series of games and discussions designed around "living peacefully" with others. As with the State Park trip, the children are transported by county schools buses.

A Fourth Cycle was Added to the Morning Rhythms—

In the past, the children had three (3) rotations each morning between 10 and 12. This year we added a fourth rotation entitled FAB or Flexible Activity Block. This was the natural outcome of adding a fourth group (the 5th and 6th graders). The kids rotate through Reading Buddies, Art, Recreation and FAB each morning between 10 and 12. FAB varied from day to day and week to week. The interns worked as a group to plan a special focus for this block. Sometimes it was built around a theme like space travel. Or, it might be about healthy eating. One session was used to teach the kids some basic Tae Kwando. Although this was a good addition, we determined that more specific and detailed planning will be included in future years. At the present time we are considering adding a math block in this time period.

We Moved the Writer's Workshop from Late Afternoon to Early Morning—

We have included a writer's workshop in the daily rhythms every year. In the past, this has been the last activity of the day. Experience told us that the kids were too tired to focus on writing at the end of the day. So, we moved it to 9:30 in the morning just after their high-energy 30 minutes of singing camp songs and burning off excess energy. The kids go to their individual classrooms where the interns work with them using writing prompts and engaging challenges to help them write sentences or short paragraphs. On some days, the kids will read their writing to the rest of the class. The youngest kids are the most difficult since many of them not only can't write, they are also not yet reading. Working with them requires patience and creative projects

like telling stories through drawing pictures, telling stories to someone else who writes it for you, practicing just moving the pencil to make letters, etc. We were much happier with the placement of this activity in the morning. The end-of-day activity is now a calm time of hearing stories read by the interns. This is a calming time and also gives the kids a chance to hear stories read with some drama or humor. It is a good listening activity.

We Stopped Serving Lunch in the Cafeteria—

If not in the cafeteria, where? Actually, we served lunch in the four classrooms. We discovered that it was much more orderly to keep the kids in their smaller groups in their classrooms than it was to have all 80 in the cafeteria. So, our volunteers put the sack lunches, milk, etc on carts and delivered them to the classrooms. The kids ate in their respective age-groups, cleaned up their rooms and it was much simpler to manage than in the cafeteria. This change resulted from necessity. The first camp was held at Dudley Elementary School and their maintenance schedule prevented us from using the cafeteria the first week of camp. The solution to the problem was delivering food to the classrooms. It worked so well that we decided to make this our normal procedure. We did continue to use the cafeteria for breakfast, afternoon snacks and the check-in/check-out procedures.

Our Volunteers Stopped Preparing the Lunches for the Bedford County Camp—

But, the kids still got lunch! “Feed the Children” in Rocky Mount has been providing breakfast and lunch food for the Franklin County camp since we began in 2008. However, Good Neighbors had been purchasing breakfast and lunch supplies from “Feed America” for the Bedford County camps. Rev. Rose Page, who administers the program in Rocky Mount, offered to provide the food for the Bedford Camps as well as the Franklin Camp. The lunches are prepared at Rocky Mount Elementary School and our task was to pick up the lunches every morning, pick up milk as needed, and pick up breakfast food once per week. She also provided the sack lunches for the summer school kids in the Bedford County schools we serve. This is a wonderful service for Good Neighbors and resulted in a savings of over \$6,000. The “Feed the Children” program is funded through the USDA. An additional feature of these lunches that fits our objectives is the nutritional value. No nut products are included, no sweets such as cookies are included, and there are no chips or similar items. Lunch usually consists of a sandwich, a fresh vegetable such as carrot sticks and a fresh fruit or fruit cup. Additionally, they provide milk and juice. As needed, we supplement the lunches with our fresh fruits and vegetables.

Additional Observations about 2011

The 21st Century Grant—

SML Good Neighbors was a co-applicant on a 21st Century Grant with Moneta Elementary School in Bedford County. This grant was funded for three years. Therefore, Good Neighbors will benefit from this grant through 2013. Funding from this grant supported one school bus route each morning and afternoon that provided transportation for approximately 50% of the kids in the Bedford camp, purchased books and supplies for camp, provided funding for a fieldtrip to Unbridled Change, provided buses for two fieldtrips and funding for part of the intern in-service training.

Rent for Intern Housing—

2011 was the first year we have not had free housing for the interns. We rented a large, lovely home in Rocky Mount for the eight interns. The location was a little far for the Bedford camp, but, overall, it was an excellent living arrangement.

The Camp Schedule and Locations—

The camp schedules were reversed this year. The Franklin camp was held first. The Franklin camp was held at Dudley elementary School and the Bedford camp at Moneta Elementary School. Both sites were excellent for our program. In 2009 and 2010 the Franklin camp had been held at Trinity Ecumenical Parish. Because the number of kids increased to 80 in each camp, Trinity was no longer large enough to accommodate our program. The primary issue that had to be addressed with the county schools was their Friday closure policy in the summer. Good Neighbors was able to use the buildings on Friday even though there were no school staff present on those days.

Background Checks for Volunteers—

Until this year, all background checks had been conducted by the HR department of the two county schools systems. Good Neighbors was granted approval in 2011 to administer their own program. The criminal background checks were conducted through LexisNexis and managed by Russell Baskett. The second part of the screen is through Child Protective Services of the Virginia Department of Social Services. Russell also coordinated this screening process. The systems worked very well and will be continued.

2011 Data

The Number of Children Served in 2011

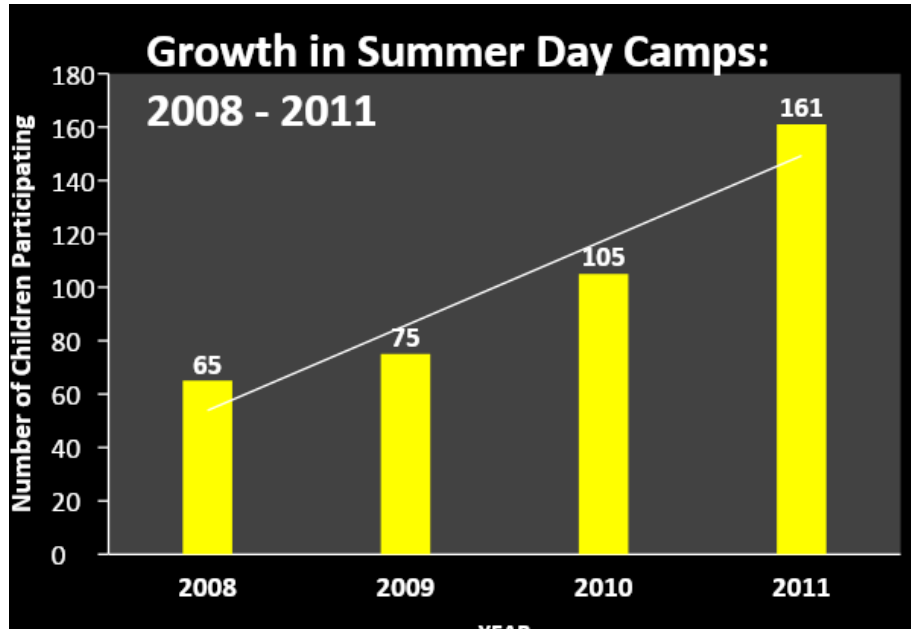
The Good Neighbors programs have grown each year since beginning in 2008. This is especially true for the Summer Enrichment Day Camps. However, we have reached our maximum capacity under our current model. The data below describe the number of children served.

The 2011 Numbers

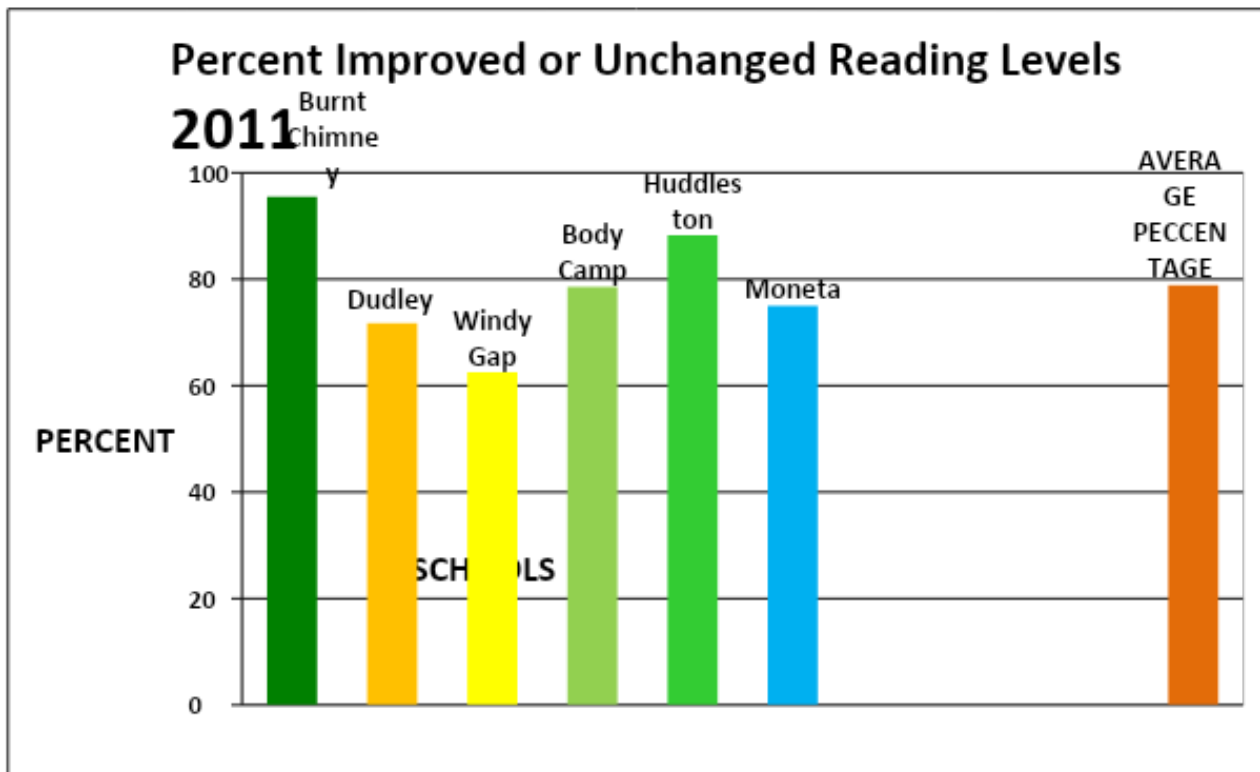
161 children participated in the Summer Enrichment Day Camps – up from 105 in 2010.
125 children in Bedford County Summer School received sack lunches for three weeks
240 children in Bedford and Franklin County Summer Schools received weekend backpacks filled with food for six meals and a book each week of summer school.

Through these programs:

4,720 lunches were served
3,220 breakfasts were served
3,220 snacks were served
401 backpacks were given to children
7,494 meals were provided in weekend backpacks
1,249 books were provided in weekend backpacks



Reading Data:



School	Number Unchanged	Number Improved	Number Decreased	Total Students
Burnt Chimney	8	13	1	22
Dudley	10	23	13	36
Windy Gap	2	3	3	8
Body Camp	7	4	3	14
Huddleston	7	8	2	17
Moneta	7	5	4	16
TOTALS	41	56	26	123*
Percent of Total	33%	46%	21%	

Note: 161 children participated. The 6th graders and children who moved away before Fall testing in October are not in this data.

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ata from educational research over the past 100 years have documented that children experience a loss of reading levels during the summer unless they have opportunities to read. This is termed—“Summer Slide.” The data also indicate that children from economically disadvantaged families are at greatest risk. Communities and schools that provide summer enrichment programs have also demonstrated that this slide can be prevented.

The SML Good Neighbors Summer Enrichment program provides reading experiences for children through the *Reading Buddy* program. Every child reads to a volunteer for approximately 30 minutes every day during the four-week program. Our partner schools have helped us track the results of this program. The results are positive. As reported in the 2010 Outcomes Assessment Report (see the reports section on the website: www.smlgoodneighbors.org), in 2010, 88% of the Good Neighbors children tested either maintained or improved their reading skills over the summer. The national data, as well as local data, indicate that more than 50% of

the children who have no reading opportunities experience “summer slide.” Teachers spend several weeks correcting that slide when the kids return to school in August.

The bar graph and data table describe results for children from the six (6) schools we serve who participated in the 2011 camps. Much larger samples are needed, and consistency of testing required, to provide data that are statistically significant. However, the trend is clear—*the reading program does make a positive difference*. According to the 2011 data, 78% of the Good Neighbors kids either maintained or improved their reading levels. This is a lower percentage than measured in 2010. However, there are so many variables involved that this difference cannot be used to shape changes or additions to our program. The important conclusion is that—the Good Neighbors reading buddy program helps reduce “Summer Slide.” Our results are consistent with national data.

Other Results:

Surveys of the children were conducted to get a sense of the impact of the reading, writing, theater, art, fieldtrips, and enrichment programs. These were the same surveys used in 2010. The results for 2011 are almost identical to 2010. Therefore, they are not repeated in this report. The 2010 results are found in the 2010 Outcomes Assessment report found at www.smlgoodneighbors.org. Surveys of parents were also nearly identical to the 2010 results,

Comments Regarding the 2011 Data

The impacts of the Good Neighbors Summer Enrichment Camps as measured by reading data, and the softer data from opinion surveys, demonstrates the benefits of these programs for the children served. This has been consistent every summer. We are now challenged to collect additional data using more precise approaches. Some of the efforts in 2012 will include:

1. Surveying the children at the conclusion of each event, e.g. fieldtrip to the State Park, rather than at the end of camp.
2. Survey parents/family more consistently; don't wait until the last day or two of camp
3. Pre and post-test the children's reading levels using simple instruments such as the San Diego Quick Assessment Reading form. In Bedford County, the 21st Century Grant will assist with the testing. Currently, the schools provide information based on testing near the end of the school year and again in October when they return. This system doesn't test every child.
4. Design, and get approval to use, information release forms that provide Good Neighbors with information from the schools about changes in student behavior after the camp program. These would be parental release forms.
5. Since math will be included in 2012, find suitable ways of measuring the impact of Good Neighbors
6. Seek methods to evaluate the impact of the writing program

7. Ask for critical review of the current survey questionnaires we use with the children
8. Develop useful surveys of volunteers and their activities
9. Assign the task of managing the data gathering activities to the assistant camp director.
The program director will also be involved.

Concluding Comments:

The Good Neighbors 2011 programs were successful. This conclusion is based on the data, as well as much antidotal information. Not only was the program successful for the children, but also for the interns. The reflections by the interns confirm this conclusion. And, the comments from parents, volunteers, staff, and school officials also support this conclusion. Further, six of the 2011 interns are returning in 2012. Considering that they are worked to exhaustion over the summer, this is a very positive statement.

We have reached the maximum number of children we can accept in the program with the current model employed. This is a concern since we know that there are now over 800 children in the six schools we serve who are on the National School Lunch Program. We are serving 160 children in the current summer program.

The 2012 summer programs will have numerous additions, but will serve the same number of children. It will also be a year of exploration to determine if there are additional needs that could be appropriately addressed by SML Good Neighbors.

Appendices

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program:

SUE BECKER

OBJECTIVE: To help develop healthy minds and bodies through good nutrition. This program concentrated on providing fresh fruits and vegetables to supplement the breakfasts, lunches, and snacks the children were fed daily as a part of the SMLGN enrichment program. Another goal of this program was to obtain these fruits and vegetables from local sources whenever possible.

OBJECTIVES MET: All objectives were met, often beyond expectation! While I did not weigh the produce and fruit, I am comfortable stating that several hundred pounds of zucchini, yellow squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, peaches, and watermelons were donated by local growers.

When the local growers were not able to donate produce, they allowed us to purchase needed items at a reduced cost. We also had a reciprocal agreement with Lake Christian Ministries to share any produce we could not use ourselves. This worked really well for both organizations. Feed the Children, the USDA program that provided the food for our campers, did a great job by adding apples, pears, oranges, tomato slices, carrots, and lettuce to their lunches this year. Because of these healthy additions we did not have to use a lot of our budget.

PROGRAM DETAILS:

PRODUCE/FRUIT DONATIONS: In early spring, I began making a list of growers, farm markets, and local grocery stores that would potentially be able to either donate or sell us produce at reduced cost. In early June, Colleen McNulty, Food Director for Lake Christian Ministries, and I traveled to several grocery stores, farm stands and orchards to talk to them about either donating or selling us the produce at a reduced cost. All were enthusiastic about the program and agreed to help in any way they could. Letters of introduction, explanation of the fruit and veggie program, and tax-exempt info were given out to all who were interested. Trinity printed all of our letters for us and has them saved on the computer. All of our donations came from Beckners' Farm Fresh Produce, Fkln Cty, and JD Scott's/Charlie Williams Vegetable and Berry Farm, Bedford Cty. They provided so much we really did not have to solicit anyone else. Gross Orchards agreed to sell us fruit at a reduced cost but because of the fruit provided by Feed the Children, we did not have to use them this year. I picked up and brought the produce to the school every week. I also made several grocery runs to purchase items like Ranch Dressing and snacks.

RECOMMENDATION: Since I may not be able to pick up the produce every week in the future, another volunteer to help with this would be great. We also need to establish tax-exempt status with all of the local grocery stores and Wal-Mart. We only have it in a few right now. We also should be able to get prices on fruits and veggies (bananas), dips, and snacks from the grocery stores now that we have a better idea of how much we need.

FOOD PREPERATION: Produce was always stored in the school refrigerators. Facilitators and intern assistants helped to prepare the produce every day. This generally included cutting or slicing the fruits and veggies and storing in food containers that were then used to pass out at lunch or snack. Several volunteers prepared zucchini bread and homemade applesauce in their homes because we were not allowed to use the school's appliances. Food allergies were taken into consideration and everything was frozen before eating to minimize the risk of food-borne illnesses. Ranch dressing was served with the various veggies. The apples were removed from the lunches and cut up for those without front teeth. Cucumbers, carrots, and tomato slices were very popular additions to lunch. Raw zucchini sticks were not well received! Snack consisted of fruit slices, homemade zucchini bread, homemade applesauce served with cinnamon graham crackers, gold fish, animal crackers, a cereal and raisin mix (mixed the more sugary cereals with raisins), watermelon (Water Day), ice cream (donated by Jim Wilson from the Homestead Creamery), and pretzels with Hummus dip (the Hummus was not a success unfortunately!) The general rule of thumb was if they had fresh fruit or veggies for lunch we gave them more of a treat for snack. Campers were strongly encouraged to try unfamiliar

foods. Food not wanted was put on the share table and given out to the families at the end of the camp day. Any additional apples were used for homemade applesauce for snack. Produce scraps were composted by Sue Becker or Shearer Rumsey. Nothing was wasted.

RECOMMENDATIONS: I would strongly recommend that we determine a lunch and snack schedule ahead of time. I realize this will be difficult with the lunches but we should be able to do it with the snack. If we know ahead of time what we are getting we won't duplicate efforts. I would like to add more fruit variety (bananas, pineapple etc.) next year especially for breakfast. An additional volunteer to help with the preparation and distribution of lunches would also be helpful. An apple slicer should be provided to each intern team so they can cut up the apples as necessary. While the zucchini bread was a definite hit with the kids, I realize there are some concerns about this being prepared in volunteer's home kitchens. Hopefully this can be addressed to the satisfaction of everyone so that we can continue to provide this popular snack. I will need some volunteer bakers if we decide to go forward with the zucchini bread.

QUANTITIES FOR 80 CHILDREN: I generally planned a piece of fruit for each child. There were some left over which we either gave away or used for snack (apples).

Watermelons: 5 large, sliced horizontally in quarters then vertically. I could usually get 22 pieces out of a horizontal quarter. This was served in large pans or trays outside where we could hose the kids off! **Apples:** 40 apples sliced with a corer/slicker. You will get 8 slices per apple. I stored in pineapple juice.

Peaches: 1 per child. They weren't very big.

Cucumbers: To be honest, I didn't count them. I just filled up a large Rubbermaid container. Not everyone ate them and whatever was left, I stored in the fridge for the next day. They were served with Ranch Dressing.

Carrots: Used the ones that come already prepared. Served with Ranch Dressing.

Zucchini bread: Sliced the loaf down the middle and then horizontally. Gave them 2 slices each. I didn't make the slices too big in case they didn't like it. I hate waste.

Applesauce: Filled a 9 Oz cup with applesauce and then gave them one graham cracker.

Goldfish/ Cereal Raisin Mix/ Pretzels/ Animal Crackers, etc.: Used a small cup and put some on a napkin for them.

I would like to acknowledge all the people who helped and supported me this summer. Thanks so much, I couldn't have done it without you!

Russ Baskett and Shearer Rumsey who trusted me enough to do my own thing!

Colleen McNulty who rode all over the countryside with me to find people willing to donate.

All the facilitators and intern assistants who cut up fruits and veggies, mixed cereal and raisins, and came up with great ideas!

All the Interns who were always supported of whatever we wanted to try.

My Bakers:

Angie Jones

Judy Wolfe

Judy's Friend (sorry Judy, I didn't get her name)

Janet Hill

Annie Murphy

Sandy Ohlerich

If I missed anyone who donated zucchini bread, I'm sorry. Your delicious efforts were definitely appreciated by all

SML State Park

Nature Week at Good Neighbors 2011

Shearer Rumsey

Nature week at Good Neighbors takes place the first week of camp. We used most of the afternoon block on Monday through Wednesday and this year we broke our time into two segments of thirty minutes instead of our previous segments of twenty minutes. On Thursday of the first week at each camp, we went on a field trip to Smith Mountain Lake State Park.

As much as possible, our nature week activities are based on an experiential education approach. The field trip to the state park was entirely experiential with all of the campers participating in both a woodland hike and an aquatic ecology program. Those activities on the first three days which were not experiential were still hands-on and used a combination of crafts, games, role playing, and good children's literature.

At the state park, the hike included activities designed to engage the campers with the forest. The older campers also participated in a trust or team building activity with each other. The hikes were led by the interns who also engaged the campers in cleaning up any litter they came across. This was an exceptionally hot summer but we prepared for the heat by limiting strenuous activities to the morning and to shaded areas and of course we carried plenty of water. In fact, because of the heat on the date of the Bedford camp trip, we changed our plans and returned before lunch in order to avoid the afternoon heat. We were blessed with plenty of enthusiastic chaperones.

Since our theme this year was 'water' and built around the idea that "We all live downstream" the aquatic ecology activity was the program we had been working toward in the earlier part of the week. Campers had already explored the world of ponds and streams and the kinds of creatures found in healthy wetlands. They had learned that the health of a stream can be measured by the kinds of life it supports. They had learned about aquatic forms of insect metamorphosis through a collection of nymphs from local streams. At the creek we were assisted by volunteer monitors from the Save Our Stream program and made use of their equipment. We also used equipment borrowed from the W.E. Skelton 4H Education and Conference Center. The creek program was a big success measured both by the creatures we caught and by the fun everyone had simply playing in a creek, something too many children miss out on these days.

We are developing a rotation of three nature themes for successive years. This will keep activities fresh for everyone and also avoid single use costs. We have begun to accumulate some basic supplies such as magnifiers but most of our activities make creative use of inexpensive materials. We are looking forward to exploring the world of soil next summer

