

Katie O'Neill- AmeriCorps Summer 2002

Growing in the Garden-Fish Iowa

This summer I have learned so much about myself, the type of children I want to work with in the future, and how to deal with children in different manners. Most of the children I worked with came from mainly stable homes, with the occasional outbursts of behavior problems, that can be expected with any child. However, I also worked with a few children who do not have the same luxuries as the others, have some type of disorder, or have something else about them that cause them to stand out from the others. At first, I wished that these children could be like the others and do whatever was asked of them, but I quickly realized that this was not going to happen so I tried to make the best of the situations. Toward the middle of the summer, I began to see mild improvements with some of the children and this gave me some much needed encouragement to keep working with them. Now, as the summer is drawing to a close, I find myself preferring to work with these "trouble" children. I become so excited and feel such a great reward when I see even the slightest improvements in their behavior. I see how much some of them need role models and hope that I can be one, even if just for a few hours a week.

Working with these children confirms my decision to work with troubled youth in the future. I have learned so much from these children, whether it is finding a way to make pulling weeds into a game or feeling on top of the world when they catch the tiniest blue gill. They have shown me that despite their situations, they are just kids and want someone to guide them. I am taking this experience, not only the work experience, but also some life lessons that I may have otherwise missed out on, if it were not for these children.



Fish Iowa and Nature Time were done on playgrounds. We taught the children many different topics related to the environment. Here we show off the "feelers" insects use.



I planned all the Growing in the Garden activities. There were 5 gardens throughout Dubuque. The kids show the Winter Squash they picked, and the other kids show tools used in the garden.

