

## Union County Clover Kids “Go Green”

How do polar bears and walruses keep from freezing in the Arctic cold? What can we learn from them that will help us stay warm and comfortable in our own homes this winter?

Those were some of the questions asked—and answered—by nearly 150 kids attending Union County Clover Kids meetings in Creston and Afton last month. Several of the hands-on learning activities focused on energy issues and the concept of “going green.”

One demonstration, in particular, drew squeals of disbelief, then delight. First, the youngsters took turns plunging bare hands into a container of ice water. Then, they did the same thing, but with hands protected in baggies of food shortening used to simulate walrus blubber. The “pretend” layer of fat over skin served as a dramatic introduction to the concept of insulation.

*Wow. that’s cold!*



*Union County Clover Kids used ice water and simulated layers of fat to learn how blubber insulates walruses from the frigid Arctic cold. It also served as a quick introduction to the concept of “going green” on energy issues.*

With that concept firmly in mind, it was easier to understand that blankets, coats, hats and mittens are all forms of insulation that humans use to adjust to winter’s chills. Similar layers of insulation in our homes prevent heat from escaping and cut the amount of energy needed to stay warm.

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“Thanks so much for leading the Clover Kids after school program. I’m amazed at how much you can achieve with such a large group of children in one hour...It’s a wonderful experience for the kids.”

*-Peg Anderson, retired Program Director, Afton Family Resource Center*

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Clover Kids is a beginning 4-H program for youth ages K-3 administered by Iowa State University (ISU) Extension. Its focus is to help children develop valuable life skills through age appropriate games and hands-on learning activities.

For more information about this and other ISU Extension programs and services, contact Cheryl Purdum, 641-782-8426, [x1purdum@iastate.edu](mailto:x1purdum@iastate.edu), OR your local county Extension office.

January, 2009