ISU 4U Promise Students Will Be Mosquito Trackers

Thanks to a $1.25 million grant from the National Institutes of Health Science Education Partnership Award, students and teachers at King and Moulton will have the opportunity to learn about and track mosquitoes over the next five years.

Dr. Gale Seiler, an associate professor of multicultural education, Dr. Katherine Richardson Bruna, Director of the ISU 4U Promise, and Dr. Lyric Bartholomay, an entomologist at University of Wisconsin-Madison, have partnered to develop the interdisciplinary project. The main goal of the Urban Eco-systems Project is to arm in-service and pre-service teachers with ambitious science practices and spark students’ interest in pursuing science study. The research team believes that students who are allowed to participate in authentic research in their own communities will make stronger connections to science.

Working together, teachers, community educators, and students will track mosquitoes in their urban neighborhood and contribute to an existing database.

Through the research they do together, they will inform the neighborhood about issues of public health, especially as connected to mosquito population management.

The first group of pre-service teachers are taking a 2-credit course on ambitious and culturally responsive science education, with a focus on using insects as teaching tools with young children.

January Mini-Conference

The first ISU 4U Promise Mini-Conference will be held on January 22, 2016. The purpose of the conference is to allow ISU 4U Promise collaborators to highlight their work, learn from one another, and reflect and plan towards the future of the ISU 4U Promise.

Anyone interested in learning more about the ISU 4U Promise is welcome to attend. A full schedule will be posted to the ISU 4U Promise website prior to the event. Feel free to come and go as needed for this special on-campus event.

Students Take Flight

In August, 21 students took part in a week long DAVinCI Flight Camp held at the Grubb YMCA. Students learned about concepts of flight in a computer program, DAVinCI, developed by VSI Aerospace, Inc., of Ames. Their designs were transferred to 3-D printers and students were able to construct and test their gliders in a friendly competition. In the camp, students were exposed to the four goals of 4-H: STEM, Arts and Communication, Leadership and Citizenship, and Healthy Living.

Dr. Christa Jackson, assistant professor of math education, Dr. Christopher Whitmer, senior project engineer at VSI Aerospace, and John-Paul Chaisson-Cárdenas, Iowa 4-H Director, collaborated to develop and implement the camp.
Designing Dialogue to Learn from Students

The Design Dialogues project partners with CFUM (Children and Family Urban Movement) and their Whyld Girls and Backyard Boyz programs. Funded through a College of Human Sciences collaborative intramural seed grant, its purpose is to learn more about the River Bend neighborhood through carefully constructed conversations that target the perspectives of youth on their learning experiences in and out of school. About fifty students are participating by sharing their stories and ideas in six discussion group sessions.

These sessions are facilitated by a team of five undergraduate students (above) from the Colleges of Design and Human Sciences. Dr. Carla McNelly, the ISU 4U Promise Post-Doctoral Research Associate co-ordinates the team that also includes Dr. Katherine Richardson Bruna, Dr. Jane Rongerude, Dr. Kimberly Greder and Glennda Bivens.

By the end of the project, students will have mapped their neighborhoods and learning spaces and made suggestions to improve their experiences in and out of the classroom.

ISU Spotlight: Glennda Bivens

Glennda Bivens partners with the ISU 4U Promise as a facilitator and member of the leadership team for Design Dialogues, and led the effort for the CommUNITY Dinner- a collaboration with the ISU 4U Promise, Department of Events Management, and Children and Family Urban Movement. As a Community and Economic Development Field Specialist for Extension and Outreach and doctoral candidate in the School of Education, Bivens is committed to creating opportunities that engage youth in shaping their communities in meaningful ways. Bivens' knowledge, drive, and collaborative spirit make her an essential partner for the ISU 4U Promise work.

School Spotlight: Principal Eric Van Dorin

Eric Van Dorin joined Moulton Elementary School this year and has quickly gotten the Moulton school year off to a "great" start. He is very excited for the future of Moulton as the partnership with the ISU 4U Promise continues to grow. Van Dorin comes to Moulton from Brubaker, where he served as Dean of Students. With 18 years of experience in various educational roles, Van Dorin's mission has always been to help students be successful. He's currently teaching Moulton students to "Be GREAT," an acronym for Growing, Responsible and Respectful, Educated, Accepting to All and Thankful.

Community Spotlight: Cameron Nicholson

Cameron Nicholson, Executive Director of the John R. Grubb YMCA, has been instrumental in providing opportunities for students from King and Moulton. He’s one of the minds behind King’s new Starfish Academy, a summer literacy program. He’s also provided space and food for an ISU 4U Promise program, DAVinCI Flight Camp. We look forward to all the other ways in which we’ll get to partner with Nicholson in the future!

CommUNITY Dinner held at CFUM

On October 24th, 32 students majoring in Events Management spent their day learning how various agencies address barriers associated with poverty from community leaders in River Bend and King Irving neighborhoods in Des Moines. In the evening, the students served dinner guests, facilitated dinner conversations, and engaged in deep reflection. This successful event was spearheaded by Glennda M. Bivens in collaboration with Eric Olson, assistant professor of Events Management, Katherine Richardson Bruna, associate professor in the School of Education, and Carmen Lampe-Zeitler, executive director of Children and Family Urban Movement. The CommUNITY Dinner was funded by the Women's and Diversity Grant.

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Contact us to nominate items for the next newsletter!