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Team effort helps kids stay FIT

campus-news

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KOKOMO, Ind. – Nursing students and the Lady Cougars at Indiana University Kokomo teamed up Tuesday to teach fitness, good health, and even a few volleyball skills to local youth.

The first annual FIT Kamp kicked off this week, sponsored by the School of Nursing, to teach kids ages six through 13 the importance of exercising and maintaining a healthy diet. FIT Kamp joins two long-running camps – Camp Eeze-The-Wheeze and KIDDS Kamp – which teach children with asthma and diabetes how to live with and manage their diseases. More than 30 local children are participating.



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The Cougars and the Kampers do one last rally before they say goodbye to each other...

Photos

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Samantha Dalpoas, 12, who attended the Camp Eeze-The-Wheeze last year, was one of the dozen FIT campers who enjoyed exercising at the Jackson Morrow Park sand courts.

"I've learned about how to take care of myself, deal with asthma, and stay fit," said Dalpoas. "I decided to attend FIT Kamp this year because I wanted to learn how to stay healthy, how to eat healthy, and exercise. This has been a lot of fun working with the volleyball team."

Cougar team members led exercises for campers – running scrimmages against nursing students, backwards and diagonally, and correctly hitting volleyballs.

"This week has been very fun and I've definitely enjoyed interacting with the kids," said junior Ashley VanSkyock, a nursing major. "Just knowing kids are learning about being healthy and active is rewarding. I'm probably going to be sad when this week is over. It's certainly made me think about specializing in pediatric nursing."

Eleven-year-old Gradyn Rogers showed off his competitiveness during the exercises, challenging everyone to sprint races in the sand.

"Today is the best so far, because we finally got to race and I love racing," said Rogers, a little breathless after racing Assistant Volleyball Coach Melissa Wetekamp. "My parents signed me up for this camp, and I'm glad they did, because I know what I'm going to be doing next summer!"

Brittany Royer, a junior who transferred from Ivy Tech Lafayette to play on the Cougar team, was excited about having the experience of working with the campers.

"I've coached fourth graders before and it's fun working with kids because they get so excited," said Royer. "Kids want to learn to hit the ball right away and are anxious to play."

For Ora Peters, helping out at camp is more than just a service project.



"Coming together with my classmates and meeting various kids in the community has been a great experience," Peters said. "Just to see the number of kids participating, whether it's to learn more about staying fit, diabetes, or asthma has been rewarding. This has been very enlightening and enjoyable."

Student interaction with the campers is vital to the success of these camps, and Lynda Narwold, director of the R.N.-B.S.N. programs and a camp coordinator, is pleased with the outcome.

"This activity is great for campers, nursing students, and the volleyball team," she said. "It gives our kids a chance to have fun while exercising, and it gives the students a chance to work with youth."

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Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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