Guardians Of The Living Water

Vanessa Simonds, Deb LaVeaux, Erin Smith, Dayle Felicia, Grant Bulltail, Jason Cummins, Mari Eggers
Project Team and Collaborators

Crow Environmental Health Steering Committee (CEHSC)
- Sara L. Young *
- Myra Left Hand
- Connie Howe
- Nathaniel Plain Bull
- Dana Wilson
- Mari Eggers *
- Robin Stewart
- David Small *
- Dr. David Yarlott *
- John Doyle *
- Ada L. Bends *
- Alma McCormick
- Brandon Good Luck
* Also on the GOLW Steering Committee

Guardians of the Living Water Steering Committee (GOLW)
- Crow Elementary School
  - Jason Cummins
- Crow Tribe Cultural Committee
  - Grant Bull Tail
- Little Big Horn College
  - Dr. David Yarlott
  - Fredrica Left Hand
  - Dayle Felicia
  - Te-Atta Old Bear
  - Jeremy Not Afraid
  - Tiffany White Clay
- Montana State University
  - Vanessa Simonds
  - Deb LaVeaux
  - Erin Smith
History

• Crow Environmental Health Steering Committee (CEHSC)

• New Partners including:
  • Crow Elementary
  • MSU Researchers

Research Partnership to Improve Health
Specific Aims

• Extend the existing partnership between CEHSC, MSU, and LBHC

• Use a participatory research approach to develop an environmental health literacy intervention(s) related to the impact of water quality on health for school-aged children living on or near the Crow reservation.

• Implement and evaluate an intervention strategy through a collaboration between CEHSC, MSU, and LBHC.
OPERATIONALIZING ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH LITERACY (EHL)

Environmental Health Literacy

- Responsibility (Guardian)
- Knowledge
- Intention
- Motivation
- Behaviors

- Respect
- Self-Efficacy
- Awareness
- Skills

CONTEXT: Customs; Culture; Values
Guar

Child 
Recipients
Rest of  
School 
Population
Rest of  
Community 
Members
Families
KEY:  
Direct Influence of Guardians

Indirect Influence of Guardians or Child Recipients

Phase 1 of the Intervention conducted by teachers

Adapted from:
Development of Program

- Bring together steering committee including CEHSC and new partners
- Identify goals of the program
- Discuss the role of children in Crow community
- Determine method for implementing the program
- Determine Topics and Messages to Cover
- Pilot program (July 2015)
Overview of the Program

• Summer Camp & After school Program
• Components of Program:
  • Learning Objectives
  • Experiential Objectives
  • Dissemination Objectives
    • Arts
    • Communication
Main Health Messages

Water is life, water is sacred, water is essential to community and personal health.
Rivers and Streams

Main Health Message: Streams change in predictable ways, from upstream to downstream. What happens at the headwaters influences what happens downstream. Streams can be contaminated and we can pick up that contamination.
Groundwater

Main Health Message

What’s happening up river can end up in your groundwater. When collecting spring water what can you look for? How can you protect the spring?
Evaluation Plan

- **Formative**
  - Assessments of intervention activities
  - Interviews with Parents
- **Measures of EHL Concepts**
  - Pre and post survey of students and parents
  - Focus Group Interviews with students
Milestones accomplished in First year

- Our team has developed
  - Working definition of Environmental Health Literacy
  - Model for a Health Communicator Program at Crow
  - Training plan for project staff
  - Plan of action for summer camp
  - Evaluation plan
- Summer Camp – To be conducted July 20-24th, 2015
Challenges

• Working with different entities – LBHC, Crow Schools, MSU
  • Coordination of time and efforts
  • IRB for working with children in the schools
  • Project timeframes and distance between sites
• Sensitivity to the needs of the community and funding sources
• Figuring out role of Guardians—the role of kids in the family
Key Take Away Messages

• What is Environmental Health Literacy and how can it be improved in our communities?

• Can children serve as agents of change?
  • What tools can help children advocate for change in their communities?
  • Will getting them interested in the environment, in science, in their community and their health lead to them advocating for their communities?

• Will this program work in other communities?
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Contact Information:

Vanessa Simonds ScD
Montana State University
316D Herrick Hall
Bozeman, MT 59717
(406)994-7396
vanessa.simonds@montana.edu

Deb LaVeaux MS
Pablo_1280@hotmail.com

Dayle Felicia MS
feliciad@lbhc.edu

Erin Smith BS
erinsmith@montana.edu