



Science of the Great Outdoors: Final Report to the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan

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Program Profile	
Program Description:	<p>The <i>Science of the Great Outdoors</i> program sought to improve the environmental science programs at the New Detroit Science Center through implementation of three activity sets: <i>Nature's Neighborhood</i>, <i>Nature's Neighborhood Programs</i>, and <i>Earth & Life Science Programs</i>. Through <i>Nature's Neighborhood</i> a new wildlife habitat was established in the middle of Detroit with the help of organizational partners. The other two activity sets entailed the development and improvement of earth and life science programs, including Discovery Room, Theater and scout programs.</p> <p>The new material and improvements made through <i>Science of the Great Outdoors</i> were used in 41 individual programs for elementary students and their families, ranging from short workshops to week-long summer camps. The Science Center held 12 summer camps using the new educational activities. Several partners were also involved in providing the new Science Center programming to the community. Partnership with local scouting groups provided programs for workshops and overnight camps. Science Center events and programs were attended by students, parents and teachers through a partnership with Herlong Cathedral School. Finally, the Science Center's largest community event was conducted as part of the 2005 Detroit Festival of the Arts. At this event, which was cosponsored by the National Wildlife Federation and the National Forest Service, 350 participants explored the <i>Nature's Neighborhood</i> habitat and learned about building a habitat in their own backyard.</p>
Program Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To inspire children and their families to discover, explore, and appreciate the environment - To design, construct and maintain a wildlife habitat at Peck Park in Detroit - To create and improve earth and life science programs - To establish new organizational partnerships
Program Funding:	Grant from the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan
Program Links:	http://www.detroitssciencecenter.org/home.htm
Evaluation Profile	
Evaluation Goals & Questions:	<p>Evaluation Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Determine the output of the program, the success in increasing participants' interest in science and outdoor activities, and participant satisfaction with the program. -Determine the impact of the project on the organization, the success and value of partnerships, and the plans for the continuation of the program in the future.

	<p>Evaluation Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Were programs implemented as intended? 2. The number of participants served and contact hours with participants 3. What were the most significant impacts of the project for the participants and for the Science Center? 4. Did participants find the project worthwhile and enjoyable? 5. Did the program change participants' attitudes about science and the outdoors? 6. Did the program change participant behavior or intention to engage in similar activities in the future? 7. How did project partnerships affect the progress of the project? 8. How did the project affect culture/ way of doing business at the Science Center? 9. In what capacity will the project be continued?
Evaluation Methods:	<p>The Evaluation used a variety of methods, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collecting statistical records on number of participants and contact hours - Staff debriefings on activities and reflection on program impacts - Survey of adult participants, including parents, caregivers, and scout leaders - Participant observation and compilation of anecdotal evidence
Evaluation Instruments:	No instruments are available at this time
How were results used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To report progress to the funder -To develop a "project story"
Evaluation Cost:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -In-kind services of a professional evaluator were secured -Other costs were covered as part of staff salaries
Evaluation Insights:	<p>What worked well? The author felt the evaluation had a very strong rubric, developed with the help of external professionals, which made use of both formative and summative evaluation methods.</p> <p>What were the important evaluation "lessons learned"? In the future, the evaluators suggest that it will be important to determine the funders' evaluation criteria before the project begins to ensure their expectations are met.</p> <p>What could have been done differently? The author would have liked to compare the benefits to participants versus non-participants (i.e. to have a comparison group) to determine to what extent benefits could be attributed to the program. Also, more quantitative analysis of the program may have been beneficial, especially to assess the effectiveness of activities for the students.</p>
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