

Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks, Summer 2020

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Background

- I worked as a children's day camp counselor for Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks at Scioto Grove Metro Park in Grove City, Ohio.
- Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks is a public agency in Central Ohio that involves a system of clean, safe, natural area parks. Metro Parks has 19 natural area parks that contain more than 230 miles of trails and over 27,700 acres of land.
- While the camp program operates throughout several different Metro Parks, Scioto Grove specifically has 620 acres along the Scioto River. It has 7 miles of trails, creeks, an archery range, ponds, and much more that the children in the programs can enjoy.
- I found this internship at the spring CFAES career fair



WORKING WITH CHILDREN

- Prior to this internship I had not experience with working with children
- Working with children can be easily frustrating but it is important to always be understanding and look at things from their perspective.
- It's important to be easy going and open to new situations. Spontaneous programs and education opportunities are sometimes more beneficial and impactful than planned ones.
- Programs and education for kids needs to be entertaining and interactive. I learned that the best way to keep a kid's attention is to implement cool facts and allow them to try and guess facts about the programs.



On the Job

Frequent Duties

- I worked as a pod leader where I was in charge of groups of 7-9 campers with age ranges from 6-12. Each week there was a new set of kids along with a new theme for the week that was interactive with the nature around us at the park.
- I watched the kids and ensured that they had an enjoyable and safe summer at camp.
- During the week I would take the kids hiking, creeking, fishing, to the archery range, and kayaking. We would also work on crafts and play games that would relate to the theme of the week which always revolved around nature and the environment.

Specific Accomplishments

- Learning how to properly deal with children and specific situations.
- Learning information and teaching it to the kids in a way that they could understand and be impacted in a positive way.



MANAGEING COVID-19

- Due to COVID 19 operations of camp continued but it was very different than in years prior. This made it so my experience differed than in standard camp seasons.
- COVID-19 made it so camp counselors were pod leaders and in charge of their own groups of campers.
- While the COVID situation is ever-changing, by the end of the camp season both counselors and campers had to wear masks, campers frequently washed hands, all common items such as toys were sanitized frequently, and pods kept a minimum of six feet from one another.
- The guidelines that Metro Parks had in place for COVID-19 were very thorough and allowed campers to have an impactful and educational summer experience during difficult times.

Reflection

- Working at Metro Parks taught me that I truly enjoy parks system and I hope to continue working in parks system whether it be Metro Parks or National Parks.
- After graduation I want to do something regarding visitor services or interpretation of the environment. Working with children was extremely beneficial for me as programs for kids are very different than they are for other age groups.
- Moving forward I have realized that working solely with kids is not what I would like to do but rather working with people of all ages and educating them about the natural world.
- During my time in this internship I was able to learn new things about the natural world. The programs and speakers for the kids taught me valuable material.
- My advice to a student interested in a similar experience would be to look at situations through a child's perspective. It's very easy to get frustrated by the actions of children when they are behaving poorly but it's important to always remember that they are kids and in some cases do not know better. Rather than getting frustrated, use it as an opportunity to understand and teach.
- With children, patience is a virtue.



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