Summer program gets kids off the couch and into the gym

With the national attention that First Lady Michelle Obama has placed on physical fitness and this country's battle against the bulge, it's no surprise more and more local parents are pushing their kids off the couch and into the gymnasium.

It's not a big struggle, though, for most parents whose children are enrolled in Gothenburg's Fit Kids program.

"The kids really look forward to it," says director Jonathan Meyer, a sixth-grade teacher leading his fourth summer of Fit Kids.

The program offers a variety of sessions for different age groups including simple fitness, basketball instruction, power and speed development and a 3-on-3 basketball league.

Beginning next month, volleyball skill development will replace basketball for most participants.

"We've tried to offer football but there just wasn't enough interest," Meyer said.

FIT KIDS

Jonathan Meyer's Fit Kids Program will continue into early August. There is still time to enroll in the fitness and volleyball programs.

For information, contact Meyer by e-mailing jonathan.meyer@doane.edu or by calling the school at 537-3651.

The program is Meyer's brainchild, something he came up with the summer before student teaching for his education degree.

While still living in Broken Bow, Meyer approached that city's summer recreation director with a plan for Fit Kids and it was immediately successful.

After his first year teaching in Gothenburg, Meyer took the idea to the District 20 school board.

"It has grown quite a bit," Meyer said.

In the first three years, Meyer said he averaged 80 students between first and eighth grades.

This year, enrollment is at 125.

"Parents have been very positive," Meyer said. "This whole community just seems to be supportive and it has worked out well."

As he has become more comfortable, Meyer has added programs.

This year he sweetened the deal with volleyball and 3-on-3 basketball.

"It was originally just fitness," he said. "We worked on overall body movements, exercise and hand-eye coordination."

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