Senior Civic Project

Trauma-Informed Fencing Demo
Camp hope pathways event

Kayla Ogden
Daniel J. Wilcox Camp hope america

★ Leading, national, year-round camping & mentoring program for youth affected by domestic violence - partners with local organizations (JBWS)
★ Trauma-informed, hope and healing centered curriculum for youth exposed to trauma to believe in themselves, others & their future
  ○ One week overnight camp
  ○ Pathways program: monthly events to maintain community created during camp
My event: Trauma-Informed fencing demo

★ My event would have been the “Pathways” event for April. Pathways events are held monthly in order to sustain the community and culture of hope created during the week at camp.

Logistics:

Who -> 20ish JBWS Camp HOPE campers (ages 8-12), 2 assistant coaches (Drew Civics Nayah Ferris & Emily Huber)

Where/When -> Police Training Academy, April 2nd, 6-8pm

What -> Trauma-Informed means being sensitive/aware of common triggers for youth impacted by domestic violence. In the context of a fencing-demo, this means avoiding overtly violent lingo, extensively explaining the safety rules and the nature of the sport as a “Game of Respect”. As a Pathways event, it also means incorporating relevant lessons in hope. Fencing teaches critical thinking, discipline, patience, and resilience. Being a unique and challenging skill, it is also excellent for building self-esteem. All of this would have been articulated during the demo.
Would-be fencing demo schedule:

6 - 6:15 → Intros, explain history, show equipment
6:15-6:30 → Demo fencing bout with assistant coaches, ask kids what they noticed (who hit who where, who hit who first, etc.)
6:30-6:35 → Warm up game
6:35-6:50 → Teach footwork, play footwork “Simon Says”
6:50-7:00 → Demo with volunteer to show use of distance (get-away-go), fencing with just lung-attack
7:00-7:10 → Demo parry 4 riposte with volunteer or assistant, practice with everyone
7:10-7:30 → Fencing, rotating partners
7:30-7:35 → Zombie pirates game
7:35-7:40 → Kids can fence me or assistants
7:40-8:00 → Time for questions & pizza!
Why It's Needed?

★ As a “Pathways” event, my trauma-informed fencing demo is needed to contribute to the programs’ mission of sustaining the community & culture of hope created during camp

★ A trauma-informed fencing demo event is needed to promote the value of sports
  ○ Sport involvement allows youth to develop skills in collaboration, determination, discipline, and resilience. It can give at-risk youth the necessary outlet to develop these skills, relieve and transform stress, and create a better future for themselves
  ○ Fencing in particular is tremendously beneficial for youth affected by trauma because the sport demands adrenaline/aggression be redirected as precise, goal-oriented action
  ○ Sports, fencing specifically, is an excellent means to achieve college scholarship and a strong academic trajectory for one’s future
Who would benefit?

★ Camp HOPE Campers who attend: learn the value of sport involvement, potentially pursue fencing or other sports for stress-reduction and emotional/social development

★ The JBWS Social Workers: can see the benefit of sport involvement for trauma-exposed youth, ideally implement more sports into their recreation programs

★ Parents: learn the holistic value of involvement in sports for their child, potentially inspire them to encourage their children to play a sport
My project & my future

★ Through my continued relationship with JBWS in planning my Senior Civic Event I was able to secure an internship for the Spring 2020 semester under the Children’s Recreation Coordinator.

★ Researching my Trauma-Informed Fencing Demo gave me the opportunity to perform a “Pitch” for the Drew University TedX on the subject.

★ Focusing on my passion for helping children, especially those affected by trauma, has inspired me to pursue a gap year/internship program (Casa de Esperanza) in Houston working with children in the foster care system.

★ Inspired me to plan for a dual JD/MSW degree from Tulane University so I can create a career to legally, and otherwise, advocate for children affected by domestic violence/abuse/trauma.