

Family Wilderness Adventure

*Dr. George E. Blackman Early Childhood Center #54
Buffalo, New York*

The Dr. George E. Blackman Early Childhood Center helped students get the most out of National TV Turn-Off Week by teaching them about places with no electrical outlets. The school capped off the week with a Family Wilderness Adventure, which taught families to appreciate the great outdoors.

Blackman's Parent Involvement Action Team implemented the wilderness adventure as part of the school's Books and Beyond reading incentive, hoping to encourage parents to limit the amount of television children watch and video games they play.

Before TV Turn-Off Week, families received a newsletter filled with ideas to keep everyone busy not only for the week, but throughout spring break as well. At the end of the week, families gathered at school for their wilderness adventure. There they learned about camping, wilderness animals, insects, trees, and more from representatives of a local children's museum. They could also take part in fun physical activities, such as a bounce house. Community agencies provided information about their services to parents, and teachers took the opportunity to show parents their children's work. The adventure ended with an auction of theme baskets to raise money for field trips and supplemental educational materials for the school.

The Family Wilderness Adventure benefited everyone—students, parents, teachers, community members, and the school as a whole. Many students and parents worked

on plans, which started in October, and community members used the event to familiarize families with their services. Students used their creativity to put together the theme baskets from materials donated by parents, teachers, and community members. Families learned more about nature and participated in fun and healthy activities. The school received funds for supplies and field trips.

The Parent Teachers Organization covered the \$500 cost of the event, which was evaluated using parent and teacher surveys. Next year, the action team plans to involve its community partners more by engaging them in the pre-event activities.

*April Kelley-Gordon, Action Team Member
(716) 816-3340*