

**Contact**

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Students at Arcadia Summer School Learn about Pollinators and Environmental Stewardship

Twenty students participating in the Summer School Program at Arcadia have been learning about many aspects of technology and the environment. On June 22, 2017, Amy Hughes, Keep Loup Basin Beautiful (KLBB) Project Coordinator, was invited by staff to share the importance of pollinators and how environmental stewardship plays an integral role in their survival and success.

Hughes provided interactive, hands-on activities that the youth participated in and also provided her insect collection for viewing. Following introductions and sharing of definitions and fun “who is a pollinator?” discussions, youth participated in an activity where they got to pretend to be a pollinator visiting flowers and collecting and dispersing pollen. The activity provided youth with the understanding that pollination is plant species specific and that successful pollination requires an adequate number of flowers present to ensure “fruit” production.

Hughes also provided an activity involving different types of food consumed daily. Youth were asked to categorize the foods into two groups “Pollinated” or “Not Pollinated.” Following the organization each food item was discussed. Youth learned that each and every food item should have been in the “Pollinated” group and learned about where items were grown and what pollinator(s) were responsible for their pollination. Hughes discussed with the youth why pollination is so important in food production and explained how without pollinators we would be responsible for hand pollinating many important food producing plants to ensure we had food for consumption.

Information on why being good environmental stewards through limited pesticide use, proper clean-up, and respecting nature is important also. Youth learned that changing one daily act, such as recycling, can make a lasting impact on the environment. Hughes used the Monarch butterfly as an example and explained how loss of overwintering habitat, pesticide use, and other environmental factors have had a negative impact on their populations. The honey bee and the Rusty Patch Bumble Bee were also discussed and how quickly populations can get to a very small number.

Lastly youth got to view the insect collection that Hughes has acquired over several years. The youth were excited to see in-person examples of different insects that can be found in the environment around them. Many questions were asked about what exactly certain species were, how they were caught, where they lived and what they ate, and how they were preserved. Following viewing the youth went outside and got to participate in some insect investigating of their own.

Hughes would like to thank Arcadia Public Schools Summer Program for inviting her to share the knowledge she has with the next generation who can make a lasting positive impact on the environment. It is paramount that we spark interest in preserving and bettering the environment around us to ensure future generations have a healthy community and environment to live in.

Keep Loup Basin Beautiful (KLBB) is grant-funded through the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) and Keep America Beautiful; and is a project of the Loup Basin RC&D Council that promotes litter prevention, waste reduction, recycling, and beautification. KLBB serves thirteen counties in central and north-central Nebraska. For more information about KLBB's education programs, email KLBB at info@keeploupbasinbeautiful.org, visit www.keeploupbasinbeautiful.org, or like them on Facebook. Contact the Loup Basin RC&D office (308)-346-3393 or stop by the office at the Loup Rivers Scenic Byway Interpretive Center, 330 South Highway 11 Burwell, Nebraska.

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