The Boys & Girls Club of Bryan, TX and the Youth Development students in the Department of RPTS had a night to remember. Music, arts & crafts, games, and laughter filled the Boys and Girls club facility on the evening of November 10th. Youth development students were tasked with promoting, planning, and facilitating a fun program for the youth members of the Boys & Girls Club.
**FUNDAY RECAP**

The RPTS youth development (YD) students arrived to the club eager to set up their activities for the evening program. Club members were curious why there were so many new faces in their facility. YD students prepared for 50 club members, age range 6-12, for their unique program delivery. During snack time, club members were given the option to sign up for the following themed activities: Arts and Crafts, Obstacle Course, Dance, and Sports. The club members were hesitant at first to try new things, but the YD students' excitement persuaded the youth to sign up in waves. There were three 25-minute activity periods with an introduction and closing to the program.

The program began with Dr. Nelson leading all students and club members in a few energetic icebreakers. After everyone was able to meet, the club members joyfully participated in their first activity period. Traci Thomas said,"at the beginning of each activity your students gave specific instructions and examples. They made sure everyone participated." Collaboration between the amazing staff at the club and YD students made for an excellent environment for all involved.

**FUNDAY OVERVIEW**

In August of 2021, Dr. Nelson and the leadership team of the Boys and Girls Club were able to discuss possible collaborations. The agreement was to provide a learning environment for the YD students to prepare and facilitate a fun youth program for the club members.

Dr. Nelson’s YD course has numerous objectives that focus on the development and understanding of effective skills for youth development. This collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club provided an opportunity for the YD students to work with local youth.

During the semester, students were required to create committees to organize themed activities, program plans, supply lists, objectives, and evaluation methods for this Funday Program. The YD students excelled in their preparation in addition to their weekly readings, volunteer service hours, and other course requirements.

One YD student had this to say about her overall experience. "I’ve taken youth development classes in the past and I believe that this program was the best thing to get us prepared for working with youth in the future. It was amazing to see all the things that we discussed in class in action. The biggest thing we were told in class that we had to overcome during our Funday Program was “expect the unexpected”. We had a sign up sheet and that changed, kids showed up during the activity and others went home during the activity. There were parts that worked great for younger kids that we had to alter for older kids. We also had to be masters of impromptu. It was the best experience and when it was all over I felt like we all left with a feeling of accomplishment." Overall, the program was a great success. Both programs are excited about future collaboration.
FUNDAY RECAP CONT.

The following activity periods were met with more laughter, fun, and memorable moments. The activities concluded and everyone who hadn't been picked up gathered in the gymnasium for the conclusion of the program. Club members kindly thanked the YD students and we all shared our favorite moments from the Funday Program. One club member shared, "thank you for taking your time to plan these fun games. Now can I go back to the dance activity!?" One YD student said, "I personally think that this was my favorite thing I have done in college and has kind of made me rethink about what I want to do in life."

Overall, the program provided the YD students with a learning experience that isn't replicable in a traditional classroom setting. The youth were elated and encouraged the YD students to come back soon. The Funday Program demonstrated the overwhelming benefits when community members and TAMU students collaborate.

"I could feel the energy in the air, and although loud, it was focused and engaging."
-Rhonda Watson