

## **You need to work with people to succeed**

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FREMONT -- A cheer rose from a group of seventh-grade girls after they successfully used an unwieldy web of ropes to lift a coffee can off a stump and place it gingerly on the grass in Birchard Park.

The challenge was one of nine posed to the several Fremont Middle School seventh-graders during a team-building program at the park Wednesday morning.

"You need to work with people to succeed," Kirsten Baker said when asked to summarize what she learned from the program.

Fellow team members Samantha Florez and Macy Reffner agreed with Baker about the importance of teamwork.

"You can't always be independent," Florez said.

"You can't do everything by yourself," Reffner added.

The course, which ran from 8:30 to 11 a.m., is a cooperative effort between the school district and Fremont's Department of Parks and Recreation.

Department Director Marc Glotzbecker said the program has been offered for about five years and tries to teach youth that difficult goals can be accomplished through cooperative effort.

"Some of the activities in the park today are easier and some are harder," Glotzbecker told a group of students before presenting them with a trust fall challenge. "But to complete all of them, you have to work together."

Another challenge was the "human ladder," where students held both ends of several wooden dowels parallel to the ground and individuals took turns climbing along the "ladder" rungs, their weight supported by their peers.

"It's amazing," language arts teacher Erin Parker said as she watched the group. "You can really see some of these kids' personalities come out while they are doing this."

Parker said some students who are a challenge in the classroom respond very positively to the outdoor, hands-on experience the team building program provides.

Math teacher Jennifer Dick pointed out another student helping lead problem-solving efforts during one of the challenges.

"It's fun to see a student who is unmotivated in the classroom take charge like that," Parker said. "It's great to see all the different kids working together."

Other stations spread around the park had students throwing Ping-Pong balls into cups of water, getting their group across an imaginary river using a few wooden planks and tree stumps and using teamwork to move a golf ball about 20 yards with a few cut-in-half pieces of PVC pipe.

Cedric Carter said the "Pong" challenge was his favorite of the day.

"I'm learning how to get good teamwork," Carter said. "It's nice getting out of the school. I'm having a lot of fun, actually."

History teacher Troy Dull told students the key to his "Condor Nest" challenge with a coffee can and rope web was communication.

"The idea here is to try to work together as a team," Dull said. "We hope to show that teamwork supersedes individuality."

Several of the seventh-grade teachers attending Wednesday said they use the annual program as an object lesson on teamwork throughout the school year.

One session of the program was held at Birchard Park last week and another is set for Friday morning.

Glutzbecker said his staff and the teachers look forward to the event each year.



Fremont Middle School's Spencer Whightman makes his way across a human ladder as he receives instructions from his classmates Wednesday during a team-building program at Birchard Park. / Jonathon Bird/News-Messenger