

Potato Chips Bad, Green Beans Good!

Aspiring health and physical fitness educator Katie Gallagher aims to get youngsters to embrace an active lifestyle and consume healthy foods by making it fun.

“The best way to reach children is to make learning a game because they process the information so much better,” says Gallagher, ’12, a health and physical major from Indianapolis who was part of a 16–student [immersive learning](#) class that developed and managed health and wellness camps in rural Blackford and Jay counties. “We had a variety of games that allowed students to create their own meal plans by playing games. In the end, they were learning a little each day about eating right and keeping active.”

The weeklong camps included a series of outdoor activities, geocaching, health and wellness games, healthy lifestyle activities, and sports. The final day of each camp featured a field trip to a nearby state park where campers used a GPS system to navigate the grounds.

The camps were an extension of a 2010 project created through the university’s [Building Better Communities Fellows](#) initiative, an [immersive learning program](#) in which faculty and students find real–world solutions to real–world problems for Indiana businesses and organizations.

Led by sport administration professor [David Pierce](#), students from several majors created the entire roster of activities for the camps.

“For our students, it was a great learning experience in setting up a camp, building activities that enhanced the youngsters’ experiences,” he says. “For many of the students and participants, the highlight of the camp may have been the geocaching games. It was a high tech treasure hunt, allowing us to integrate [emerging media](#) into the immersive learning class.”

As a result of the program, Gallagher says, she and other Ball State students gained insight from not only developing a camp curriculum but also from their interactions of students in grades 3 through 8.

“I got involved in this because children are my passion,” she says. “I want them to understand

that sitting on the couch all day playing video games and eating chips will eventually ruin their health. If they learn to change their eating habits and learn to be active, they'll shape their lives for years to come."

<http://cms.bsu.edu/Features/Global/ImmersiveLearning/PotatoChipsBad.aspx>

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