

Thrill of discovery hooks kids on science



College for Kids interests young scientists through hands-on activities.

Definition of engaged learner: Kids who give up snack time to keep working in science class.

The teacher engaging these students is Laura Lee, an associate professor of biology at the [University of Wisconsin-Marshfield/Wood County](#) [1].

“Early in my college career, I decided to teach biology at the university level instead of K-12,” she says. “At the time, I felt I had more in common with college students, since I was still one myself. After teaching college biology for 10 years, my daughter was born, and I discovered how much fun it is to share the natural world with small children; the joy of discovery, the thrill seeing a pretty flower or a cool bug.”

She shared those joys and thrills by participating in two programs through the [Office of Continuing Education](#) [2] at UW-Marshfield/Wood County.

The first was a week-long Middle School Academy class on dissections.

“They really enjoyed dissecting a variety of animals, including starfish, crayfish and perch,” Lee recalls. “They were quite interested in comparing body systems among these different groups of animals. I was impressed with their dedication. Some gave up snack time so they could stay longer and work on their dissections.”

The following week Lee taught younger children in the University’s popular College for Kids program. In the “Biology: Big and Small” class for third to fifth-graders, she says, “My goal was to show them that biology occurs at all different levels: from the smallest cells in our body to the largest of ecosystems.”

They walked through the UW-Marshfield/Wood County Arboretum, studying the growth and structure of forest ecosystems. They took a DNA extraction from their own cheek cells and learned how to use microscopes and other laboratory tools.

As cool as that was, the kids were even more excited by a dissection activity.

“The most popular activity was dissecting owl pellets,” Lee says. “By examining the bones that are coughed up by these nocturnal predators, the students could determine their diet and construct food

Thrill of discovery hooks kids on science

Published on Annual Report 2012 (<http://annualreport2012.uwex.uwc.edu>)

chains.'

To find out about Continuing Education opportunities for all ages throughout the year, "like" our Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/UwmwcContinuingEd> [3]

For information please contact us at:

Phone: 715-389-6520

E-mail: msfce@uwc.edu [4]

Links:

[1] <http://www.marshfield.uwc.edu/>

[2] <http://www.marshfield.uwc.edu/ce/>

[3] <https://www.facebook.com/UwmwcContinuingEd>

[4] <mailto:msfce@uwc.edu>