

Rec2Reality program at KWU - Spring 2016

Learning Life Skills Is Fun and Games for USD305 Students

KWU's Student-Run Rec2Reality Program Unlocks Doors for Exceptional Students

It's one thing to play a game using the Nintendo Wii. It's quite another to do that recreational activity in the real world. But through a unique partnership with USD305 called Rec2Reality, the Sports and Exercise Science students at Kansas Wesleyan University are helping high school students with exceptionalities to make that big transition and try things possibly for the first time.

On Fridays at 10 a.m., beginning on Jan. 29 and running through April 22, the KWU students are leading the public school students in a Wii activity in the Student Activity Center one week, and the following week helping them to try the same activity for real, on campus or out in the community. Two KWU students are assigned to each USD305 student partner.

"All our USD305 students participating in Rec2Reality this spring are from South High School, and their ages range from 17–21," said Brandi Calahan, USD305 Special Education Coordinator. "In school we focus on academics and vocational skills, but these students need support learning leisure skills. Our students also learn a great deal about social skills through this experience. Because many of our students are the same age as the college students, the KWU partners are amazing role models for our students to understand the appropriate ways of interacting socially with their peers."

Bryan Minnich, associate professor and chair of Sport and Exercise Science, wants this program to teach service and leadership skills to his students, while also making a difference in the lives of those they assist. His students learn to write a lesson plan, put together an individualized Education Program (IEP) and design a rubric that can be used to assess the skill level of their assigned student. Now in its eighth year, Rec2Reality involves 20 KWU students and 10 South High students.

"It's a win-win for everyone," said Minnich. "The hope is that the high school students will build up their confidence and be more involved in community recreational activities after transitioning out of the school program. The most visible impact are the personal connections between my students and their USD305 partners. Real friendships are developed."

Rec2Reality also offers an internship opportunity for a KWU student leader. Jacob Lunz, a junior Exercise Science major and Men's Basketball player, is in charge of creating, organizing and implementing the schedule of weekly activities planned for the spring semester.

"We learn about different exceptionalities and how to interact with those of our partner," said Lunz. "For the high school students, it's the highlight of their week to get to play different sports and, most importantly, to get good exercise."

The Wii game sessions take place in the Student Activities Center. The real-world activities are planned for locations on campus and in the community.

THE SPRING 2016 REC2REALITY SCHEDULE (Fridays at 10 a.m.)

Jan. 29 – Wii Bowling – Brown Mezzanine (2nd floor, SAC)
Feb. 5 – Bowling – All Star Lanes

Feb. 19 – Wii Basketball – Brown Mezzanine (2nd floor, SAC)
Feb. 26 – Basketball – Muir Gym

Mar. 4 – Wii Dance – Brown Mezzanine (2nd floor, SAC)
Mar. 11 – Dance – Muir Gym

PHOTO OP:

Apr. 1 – Wii Mini-golf – Brown Mezzanine (2nd floor, SAC)
Apr. 8 – Mini-golf – Jumpin’ Joes Family Fun Center*
(*if weather is inclement, then they will go to Starlight Golf in Central Mall)

Wednesday, Apr. 13 – 6 p.m. – Banquet for the USD305 students, parents, teachers, KWU students –
Hauptli Student Center, main floor of the Student Activities Center

Apr. 15 – Wii Fishing – Brown Mezzanine (2nd floor, SAC)
April 22 – Fishing – Lakewood Park near the Salina Country Club

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REC2REALITY CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE MEDIA

Please alert Bryan Minnich in advance and let them know if you plan to send a photographer or reporter to any of the spring 2016 Rec2Reality gatherings.

Bryan Minnich, associate professor and chair, Sport and Exercise Science
Chair, Division of Applied Sciences – Kansas Wesleyan University
785-833-4428 | bryan.minnich@kwu.edu

Jacob Lunz – KWU Student Coordinator of Rec2Reality
Kansas Wesleyan University
Cell: 402-369-6032 | jacob.lunz@kwu.edu

Brandi Calahan – USD305 Special Education Coordinator
785-309-5100 ext. 5133 | brandi.calahan@usd305.com

Rhonda Bird – Assistant Director of Special Education
Central Kansas Cooperative In Education (CKCIE)
785-309-5104 | Cell: 785-493-2224
rhonda.bird@usd305.com