

A night of family fun? Snow problem!

Winter Family Fun Night is Monday

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HOUGHTON - For families looking for something to do together, the Western U.P. Math and Science Center and the Michigan Technological University Center for Science and Environmental Outreach's Winter Family Fun Night will provide an opportunity to have fun and enjoy the great outdoors.

Article Photos



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On Monday the Michigan Technological University Center for Science and Environmental Outreach and the Western Upper Peninsula Math and Science Center will host a Winter Family Fun Night at the Nara Nature Center and Park seen Friday. The program will be the first in a year-long series designed to get kids and their families exploring the outdoors. The event is open to students in grades K-6 and their parents.

The Winter Family Fun Night will be held from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Monday at the Nara Nature Center and Park. Families can put together nature crafts, including birchbark cut-out ornaments, inside the Nara Nature Center Chalet, or enjoy a nighttime nature hike in the woods on foot or on snowshoes. According to the press release for the event, craft supplies, hot chocolate, cider and tea, as well as child - and adult-sized snowshoes will be provided as supplies last. However, the release encouraged families who have their own snowshoes to bring them along.

Joan Chadde, director for Michigan Tech's Center for Science and Environmental Outreach and education coordinator for the Western Upper Peninsula Center for Science, Math and Environmental Education, said the event will be the first in a monthly series of programs, funded by a grant from the Michigan Alliance of Environmental Professionals.

Though Chadde said programs like this one have been put on in the past, the difference is, this year, grant money will support a year-long program.

"The goal of the grant is going to be family fun activities that (kids) can do outdoors, that are both recreational and educational," Chadde said.

The plan is to offer a program one evening per month, as well as one Saturday afternoon per month, she said.

Denise Landsberg, an environmental educator with the Western U.P. Center for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education, said that though some of the details of the programs, including specific dates and potential materials costs, have not been confirmed, some of the programs that are planned will include a Track and Trail, where participants will go on a hike and look for animal tracks, Winter Food Webs, where kids can learn what animals eat during the winter, and Leap Into Spring, where families can get outside and search for signs of spring. The activities will take place either at the Nara Nature Center or the Massto Hhito Chalet.

Both Chadde and Landsburg agreed that one of the main goals for the programs is to get kids to go outside and get active.

"I think it's important just to get families to go out outside and do outdoor activities, but at the same time, learn about the environment, get involved in nature. I think you can do two things at the same time," Landsburg said.

Chadde said hopefully getting kids outside at an early age and getting them outdoors with their families will help build healthy habits.

"Having their families be interested and confident and comfortable (with the outdoors), it's more likely the kids will spend time outdoors," Chadde said. "It's a healthy thing to do."

For more information about the program, contact the Michigan Tech Center for Science and Environmental Outreach at 487-3341.

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