

## ASUI brings West Park Elementary students to campus

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*Children climb on the Student Recreation Center climbing wall during the 2007 “Kids on Campus” event. The ASUI program brings elementary school students to campus where classes are conducted for the children. Courtesy photo*

Seniors perpetually like to complain about how young the new freshmen look, but some students on campus are clearly younger than others. An ASUI program, “Kids on Campus,” brings elementary school students to campus where they attend classes structured for children. “Students from West Park Elementary come over to the University of Idaho at certain times throughout the year,” said Ashley Cochran, ASUI Youth and Educations Programs intern. Cochran, a senior in art and design, heads the program.

Although the students aren’t here for Anthropology 100 class, or Math 143, they are here for a new learning experience. “I think it enhances the idea of college,” Cherisse Hill said, a morning kindergarten teacher at West Park Elementary School. Hill has been involved with the program since it began three years ago.

The program is run through the UI Volunteer Center. Elementary students in kindergarten to second grade come once a month, and third grade and up come once a semester. Cochran said the volunteer center is flexible with schedules and any amount of time a student can volunteer is helpful. “It is important for college students to realize anyone can go for it and volunteer no matter what their schedule is,” said Christina Kerns, ASUI Student Activities Coordinator. Professors, departments and colleges have all been cooperative. Lessons have included science-related topics and Thanksgiving.

“In one of the lessons, the children got to learn how to make their own ice cream,”

Cochran said. The students had huge smiles on their faces as they rolled their ice cream back and forth, she said. “The program incorporates the students’ curriculum, which is nice,” Hill said. Cochran said she was surprised by the students’ willingness to present at the Thanksgiving lesson. “They each were assigned to think about what they were thankful for. I figured they’d be too shy to speak, but they all volunteered,” Cochran said.

Hill said the students love to see familiar faces when they come to campus. “Some students point out where their parents work,” she said, “Kids on Campus helps them get more comfortable in a college environment.” UI is a big part of Moscow, and the elementary students get to experience that piece of the community, she said. “The students look up to these volunteers as role models,” Hill said. The program is getting positive feedback from elementary students and parents, Hill and Cochran both said.

Another program Cochran has started is a pen-pal system for elementary students that don’t physically come to campus because of the distance. “There are 23 college student pen pals and two to 15 students have been helping out with the Kids on Campus program,” Cochran said.

Cochran said she plans to expand Kids on Campus to other elementary schools, as well as preschool. “One of the best parts about Kids on Campus is going to pick up the elementary students. We all hold hands, and their energy that early in the morning is contagious,” Cochran said.