

EXTENSION
SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell



ILLINOIS
Extension
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER
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Julie Dantone, SNAP-Ed instructor implemented a new approach to her Organ Wise Guys curriculum in order to meet the needs of a student born without limbs. She now uses a stethoscope as one way to help students learn about their pulse rate after exercising.

Stethoscope Aids SNAP-Ed Lessons in a Unique Way

At the beginning of the 2019–2020 school year Julie Dantone, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—Education instructor was presented with a unique challenge as she was kicking off the Organ Wise Guys curriculum at Dirksen Primary School in Pekin. How do you teach a child to check their pulse when the child does not have any arms?

“In Organ Wise Guys we teach the students how to make healthy food choices, the importance of exercise, and drinking plenty of water,” mentioned Julie. “One of the favorite stories is about ‘Hearty Heart.’ After exercising we learn how to find our pulse and see how much faster our heart is beating.”

Among the six different classrooms in which Julie teaches at Dirksen, one student was born without limbs. From Julie’s perspective that didn’t slow him down or deter him from participating in the lessons. His perseverance and positive attitude drove Julie to go the extra mile to come up with an alternative way to teach the hands-on activity of taking your pulse.

“This was a unique situation for me and all of my colleagues I spoke with about it,” continued Julie. “I came up with the idea of using a stethoscope and worked my way through the process to have this new approach approved to supplement my lessons. It has been more successful than I ever imagined.”

By the second monthly visit to Dirksen, Julie had a stethoscope in her Organ Wise Guys kit and was excited to help her happy, little guy try it out. His classmates got excited and asked to try it too. Now the tool has become an added feature to all of Julie’s Organ Wise Guys exercise lessons, and students throughout Tazewell County have doubled their hands-on learning about their pulse rates by both feeling it and hearing it.

The stethoscope has been a huge hit for all the students no matter what their abilities are. This is a wonderful example of the special efforts our SNAP-Ed instructors make to help all of their students learn more about healthy foods and healthy living.

According to the Organ Wise Guys website, participants are shown to have statistically significant improvements in body mass index percentile, blood



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pressure, as well as higher standardized test scores, compared to children that don’t have this curriculum. The children learn about nutrition and health in fun and creative ways that helps them retain the information. This helps the children take better care of their bodies and reduce obesity and other related diseases.