

The Family YMCA

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FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
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PRESS RELEASE

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Y Partners with Schools for Environmental Clubs

Los Alamos, NM: The Family YMCA received funding from two sources this fall in support of environmental clubs at the middle and high schools this year.

A State Farm Insurance grant of \$5,000 combined with \$1,000 from the Thaw Charitable Trust based in Santa Fe will enable the Y to provide hands-on service for high quality environmental learning in youth-driven activities. The Y is partnering with the school-based clubs to recruit community members and partners to assist with projects that club teachers do not have time to fully develop, and the Y will provide transportation to youth-identified projects during out-of-school time hours. Other supporting partners in the school-based clubs are the Pajarito Environmental Education Center (PEEC) and the Los Alamos Co-Op.

Bucks for Bears is one example of how the collaboration supports youth ideas. An 8th grader in the program came up with the idea to gather food and donations for the Wildlife Center in Española.

The club at the high school is working to improve class traditions in regard to reducing the negative environmental impacts of the annual Paint LA Mountain Event held during homecoming's spirit week. This year the youth changed the tradition to an ecologically friendly and colorful large-scale release of spices in cooperation with the Co-Op. Before the event the LAFD sprayed the students so that the colorful spices would stick to them, and then the department spray-cleaned the youth after the "spice fight." The high school club is also promoting a green film series through PEEC and the Y. Participation in the clubs is free to students.

The grants also support the planning of a youth retreat in the Jemez Mountains wherein PEEC will provide snow shoes, fire ecology lessons, and leadership and team building activities. The Y is also working with Bandelier National Monument staffers who have provided a trail to the clubs, and summer education programs that will provide outdoor activities and education for students. This partnership will also provide archeological impact and local history lessons.

These two grants will enable the Y to develop community capacity in order to forward youth-driven initiatives. For more information about the clubs, call Adventure Director Sylvan Argo at 662-3100.

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