



Ezra Mann | Aug. 27, 2015

## **PV X-Treme Fun a summer hit**

It's safe to say that the X-Treme Summer Fun program was a win-win for the community and it's guaranteed to become a regular thing in Pauls Valley.

X-Treme Summer Fun helped bridge the gap for kids needing nutrition and activity outside the regular school year. The numbers were impressive for a first year effort.

For those like PV Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Samford, the positive responses exceeded their expectations.

"That to me is what speaks volumes. That was the whole intention of the program. To feed children and get them active in something constructive," said Samford. "They were active from the time they came in until they left. I think we definitely did that, knocked it out of the ballpark."

To put it in perspective how well the nine-week program did, 3,579 lunches were served, which amounts to \$10,127.50 and all to 518 kids. The highest attendance was 210 children and once things settled in, the average was about 50-75 kids per day.

Volunteer Erin Creach, noticed how much good was done with establishing good habits and behaviors. The one thing she saw the most impact from was a share table. That's where kids could trade the various healthy snacks if they wanted to and try something else on a particular day.

"It was a great program," said Creach, who is now leading the newly created Healthy Living program. "I was just happy to see the smiles on the kid's faces. We know some of those kids may not have had a nutritious meal otherwise."

It was also a learning experience for those leading the program. Samford noted that they will look making changes and they hope to make it more efficient.

"By only having it three hours a day, we were able to focus on keeping kids active and engaged.

There wasn't a whole lot of sitting around doing nothing," said Samford. "There's room for it to change and be better, we're excited about it.

"I can't thank the Oklahoma Regional Food Bank enough for letting us know there was a need for a summer feeding program."

Other generosity that made it possible came from the schools providing a bus and driver.

The Pauls Valley Rotary Club recently gave a grant to provide more refrigeration and freezer space next year.

The City of Pauls Valley partnered with Allies For Better Living to provide most of the staffing. Programs through Workforce Oklahoma and the Chickasaw Nation provided several young adults to help throughout the summer.

"All these partnerships, it doesn't get much better than that. Everybody wins when you're putting all these programs together. That's a reward for me," said Samford. "The thing that I enjoyed about it too, there's kids we got to know and they bonded with the staff here."