NIH SciEd24

See Us-Be Us: Inspiring Future Veterinarians Using a Veterinary STEM Ecosystem

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SEPA SCIENCE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP AWARD
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www.VetaHumanz.org

https://nihsepa.org/project/see-us-be-us-inspiring-future-veterinarians-using-a-veterinary-stem-ecosystem/

The League of VetaHumanz is an alliance of veterinary superheroes in academia, practice, research, government, and industry who are committed to engaging with under-resourced communities across the globe to provide access and support for youth who aspire to careers in the veterinary profession.

Program and Participant Characteristics

Program type (Please check all that apply):

_X_ Curriculum. _X_ Out-of-school program

__ Exhibit __ Interactive multimedia

__ Teacher PD

__ Research experiences for students or teachers

_X_ Other (describe): In-person and self-guided veterinary STEM educational experiences for K-4 students.

Setting(s): _X_ Formal _X_Informal

Types of participants

_X_ Students __ Teachers _X_ Scientists

__ Families __ Public

__ Other (describe):

Grade level(s) of participants

__ PreK _X_ Elementary (K-5) __ Middle (6-8)

__ High (9-12) __ Adult

Characteristics of the populations you serve relative to DEIA: Diverse and Low SES

Program Activities

Our award-winning SuperPower Packs are self-guided, educational experiences for kids lacking access to in-person veterinary role models. Each SuperPower Pack contains an activity to help kids engage in veterinary careers by taking on the persona of a veterinary superhero. 7 SuperPacks have been developed: Stat!, Vaccines!, Do You Have Diarrhea?, Beast Moves!, Go Vet!, Moooo Vet, and Vet Adventures! Over 22,000 free SuperPower Packs have been given to children. Four SuperPower Packs have been recognized with Academics' Choice Brain Toy Awards.

ACADEMICS' CHOICE™ BRAIN TOY AWARD WINNER

Evaluation		**Key Accomplishments and/or Findings**
Constructs measured __ Content knowledge __ Skills __ Nature of science _X_ Career awareness _X_ Attitudes (e.g., interest, identity, belonging) __ Quality or fidelity of implementation _X_ Other (describe): Role model embodiment, Engagement		"League of VetaHumanz uses a nationwide network of university-community partnerships to provide veterinary STEM learning experiences for children who are more likely to lack access to enriching, supplemental educational opportunities due to systemic barriers based on their race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. To include participation beyond in-person programming, SuperPower Packs, self-guided, learning experiences, were developed. Leveraging social cognitive career theory and the "Batman Effect," SuperPower Packs are designed to build self-efficacy, and seed STEM and veterinary science career aspirations by engaging children in STEM learning through connections with a veterinary role model. Four SuperPower Packs were developed. Beginning in the fall of 2021, for 17 months, 16,655 SuperPower Packs were distributed to children in 23 states. A small portion of children who received the game (3.8%, N = 614, 6-12 years old) returned evaluation surveys that measured activity engagement, likelihood of role model identification and demographics. Participants indicated variation in their experiences, but mean scale scores show desirable perceptions of engagement (M_{Range} = 2.38 –2.90/3) and role model identification (M_{Range} = 2.15 – 2.94/3). These positive learning and role model experiences help set the stage to encourage youth to pursue similar learning and career opportunities in the future." *San Miguel SF, McDavid L. 2024. League of VetaHumanz SuperPower Pack Program: Introducing Young People from Diverse Backgrounds to STEM Learning Activities and Veterinary Science Careers. Journal of STEM Outreach 2024;7(2):1–11. PMCID: PMC10906976.*
Methods _X_ Tests/surveys __ Interviews/focus groups __ Observations __ Artifacts (e.g., student work) __ Other (describe):		
Design characteristics __ Comparison or control group _X_ Pre/post surveys or assessments __ Longitudinal tracking of participants __ Other (describe):		
Project Lessons Learned		
• Self-guided educational experiences can be an effective strategy to deliver engaging veterinary STEM curricula. • In-person and virtual methods are both effective means of introducing children to diverse veterinary role models.		

Questions, Advice Wanted, or Topics of Discussion for the SciEd Community (optional)
Advice on strategies for encouraging participants to return surveys, given IRB constraints, would be greatly appreciated.