

# Simply Keep It Local

*Cuvilly program focuses on sustainability*

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In an effort to teach children about sustainability, Cuvilly Arts and Earth Center is running a new camp this summer, "Simply Keep It Local," or, simply, SKIL.

Erika Gorgenyi, the center's environmental education coordinator, has organized the new program that will focus on bioregional living, showing middle school-aged youth what it would be like to rely only on what can be grown and maintained in one's local environment. During the weeklong camp, participants will be able to help plant a garden, go kayaking and learn about Native American culture.

Gorgenyi has ten years experience in outdoor education and leading team-building exercises that align with Cuvilly's philosophy of teaching children "what they need to know for life."

"I've been trying to start more outdoor activities," she said.

While the new summer camp is geared specifically toward kids 10-13, the school offers programs all year round for all ages. "We-cycle," for instance, encourages everyone to feel comfortable riding a bike to and from places in town instead of relying on an automobile. To support that, Gorgenyi said, Cuvilly is implementing a new workshop to teach people how to take care of their bikes.

During the winter, the center offers different art-related programs like wool spinning and knitting.

And, Cuvilly has a community garden maintained by volunteers. The garden was built in an

effort to reach out to the community and, Gorgenyi said, it's been successful in drawing attention.

"We like doing things where people of different interests can come together," she said.

SKIL will be just another way the center can reach out to the community through teaching the younger generation how to live locally and appreciate the benefits of sustainability.

"It's hard for kids to imagine, 'What if I didn't depend on oil,'" Gorgenyi said.

She hopes the program will open their eyes to the number of things today's society depends on and what changes can be made. Cuvilly has an on-site wind turbine that makes a good example of renewable energy.

Because the program is new, Gorgenyi said there will of course be some learning for the staff as well.

"It's a little bit of a trial and experiment," she said.

Gorgenyi and Sister Patricia Rolinger are also hoping to build an authentic Native American dwelling on site.

"She's been really wanting that to happen for a while," Gorgenyi said of Rolinger.

The SKIL camp offers a nice opportunity to make that happen.

"We're going to approach it by looking at how the Native Americans lived," Rolinger said of teaching the children how to live locally.

She said the main theme behind the program is to make youth aware that it is possible to live without oil-based products.

"It's to plant the seed in these kids heads that



COURTESY PHOTO

**Cuvilly Environmental Education Coordinator Erika Gorgenyi and preschool student Miranda Lloyd get to work last fall on the school's farm preparing water for the livestock.**

we can live without oil," she said.

The camps will introduce recreational activities, such as canoeing and kayaking, that do not depend on oil or gasoline.

"I think it kind of empowers the kids," she said.

And most importantly, Rolinger said, she wants them to know they can "still have a good life."

The camp will begin the third week in July running Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. and is a one-week program. Deadline for sign-ups is July 6. For information visit [www.cuvilly.org](http://www.cuvilly.org).