A normal Iowa family experiences a very **Odd (Squad)** camp experience

Iowa Public Television Brings Ready To Learn Initiative to Storm Lake area.

Johnston, Iowa – Last summer, Iowa State University (ISU) Extension hosted a special camp program at the Storm Lake Methodist Church, provided through a partnership with Iowa Public Television (IPTV). The Odd Squad camp incorporated STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning while children took on the roles of Odd Squad agents. They solved odd cases, designed odd gadgets, played digital and offline games and learned from the original agents from the popular PBS KIDS show, Odd Squad.

Why do kids need camps like these? The answers are plentiful. Just ask Anna Negrete and her two children, Sofia (8) and Santiago (5). Anna works as a third grade teacher at the Storm Lake Elementary School where she learned about the camp and enrolled her kids. She felt it was important because neither she nor her husband, who works in the radiology department at the Buena Vista Regional Medical Center, had the resources or opportunity to participate in such a camp while they were growing up. Anna wanted to provide this advantage to her children, and she didn’t stop there. She stepped up to help lead the camp after receiving an email seeking additional help.

During the camp, kids worked with other kids who were different ages, went to different schools and even lived in other towns. Sofia’s favorite memory was doing hands-on activities and challenges at the end of each day. Santiago, who is obsessed with numbers, told Anna his favorite part of camp was making friends and working with others. Anna believes learning to cooperate with others is a life skill that will open doors for her kids in the future. She wants to teach all kids to get along and work together despite their differences, so they will have a more accepting society as adults.

Can a camp really help kids in so many ways? Anna believes so. Sofia has aspirations of becoming a doctor, astronaut or scientist when she grows up. All of those career paths will require STEM learning and working well with others. Santiago told Anna he’s thinking of becoming an engineer, teacher or doctor. Maybe the camp helped to inspire his desire to become an engineer. Anna thinks anything involving math, science and cooperation will get her kids closer to their dream careers.

IPTV has been working in the Storm Lake area as part of a Ready to Learn grant. The grant from the U.S. Department of Education and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting provided the camp curriculum and activities. Some outreach activities have staff involvement from IPTV, but other outreach included partnering with schools and other entities like the Storm Lake Public Library and ISU Extension. Anna has taken advantage of many of these offerings.
“I think many of our kids are eager to learn new things especially when it comes to science,” Anna said. “We also have great administration who are devoted to student achievement. The only thing I would wish for is that this type of program could be offered to more kids. Sofia and Santiago had the privilege to attend the Scratch Jr. coding camp, the Odd Squad Camp, and the Family and Community Learning sessions for preschoolers and their families. Even though my kids were learning important skills, there are other kids who didn't participate from our school district who would benefit way more than my own.”

How can more families take advantage of these Ready To Learn resources? By keeping an eye open for upcoming events this coming year! Also, by checking with the library, ISU Extension and school newsletters. ISU Extension plans to provide another Odd Squad camp this Fall. Contact Nichol Kleespies, kleespie@iastate.edu for more information.

The CPB and PBS have partnered with IPTV to provide early learning resources to underserved communities through an innovative community engagement model. IPTV received a Community Collaboratives for Early Learning and Media (CC-ELM) grant to give young children from low-income families a strong foundation in early science and literacy by identifying and working with community partners. IPTV is working with the East Early Childhood Center and UDMO Head Start, as well as Storm Lake Elementary School, Storm Lake Elementary Tornado Academy, Lunchtime Solutions, Iowa State University Extension and the Storm Lake Public Library to promote effective educational uses of the PBS KIDS science and literacy-based programming, community-based outreach and research on educational effectiveness.

Learn more at Iptv.org. For more information about Iowa Public Television, please contact Susan Ramsey at 515.725.9703 or Susan.Ramsey@iptv.org.

About IPTV
Iowa Public Television is Iowa's only statewide television network. IPTV's mission to educate, inform, enrich and inspire Iowans guides its quality, noncommercial programming that tells Iowa's stories like no one else can. Four statewide, public channels offer programs of lasting value to Iowans, regardless of where they live or what they can afford: IPTV (.1), IPTV KIDS (.2), IPTV WORLD (.3) and IPTV Create (.4) on Channel 11, Des Moines; Channel 12, Iowa City; Channel 21, Fort Dodge; Channel 24, Mason City; Channel 27, Sioux City; Channel 32, Waterloo; Channel 32, Council Bluffs; Channel 36, Davenport; Channel 36, Red Oak. More information can be found at Iptv.org.

About CPB
The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967, is the steward of the federal government's investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operations of nearly 1,500 locally owned and operated public television and radio stations nationwide. CPB is also the largest single source of funding for research, technology and program development for public radio, television and related online services. For more information, visit cpb.org, follow on Twitter @CPBmedia, Facebook and LinkedIn and subscribe for updates.

About PBS KIDS
PBS KIDS, the number one educational media brand for kids, offers all children the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television, online, mobile and community-based programs. Kidscreen- and Webby-award winning pbskids.org provides engaging interactive content, including the PBS KIDS video player, now offering free streaming video accessible on computer- and mobile-device-based browsers. For more information on specific PBS KIDS content supporting literacy, science, math and more, visit pbs.org/pressroom, or follow PBS KIDS on Twitter and Facebook.
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