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Muskegon Winter Sports Complex Launches DUNEiversity

Outdoor education program offers team building for employers, teachers

MUSKEGON, Mich.- The Lake Michigan sand dunes are more than 3,000 years old, but there's something new in the sand dunes around Muskegon State Park.

The Muskegon Winter Sports Complex is launching its first year-round program with a DUNEiversity, an educational program that teaches team building as well as environmental awareness and how to stay active and healthy outdoors.

Groups ranging from elementary students, to sports teams, to corporate leadership teams can arrange a private reservation to spend a day in the sand dunes with a facilitator learning and developing team skills.

The program uses experiential learning as a way of teaching, where both kids and adults are taught how to work together as a team through playing games and adventuring in the outdoors. Each game is followed up with a period of reflection facilitated by a DUNEiversity staff member.

"Last summer we beta tested the program with kids from local schools and some local businesses like the Community Foundation and Holiday Inn managers," said Bill Bailey, DUNEiversity's Adventure Planner.

"What we found is adults have just as much fun playing outdoors and can learn just as much as any kid can. You're never too old to play and learn," said Bailey

The program will be in place year-round and groups interested in participating can work with DUNEiversity staff to set goals and arrange an outing.

The Winter Sports Complex is operated by the Muskegon Sports Council, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Last spring the organization announced plans to develop a zip line canopy tour and other year-round attractions. A portion of the plan was crowd funded last fall and construction will begin later this year.

"DUNEiversity will play a big role in advancing our mission into year-round activities," said Jim Rudicil, Executive Director of the Muskegon Sports Council.

"We want to make Muskegon County a healthier place and we believe we'll reach that goal by working with our local teachers and employers to get more students and working class individuals active in the outdoors through team building," said Rudicil.

DUNEiversity has already booked school field trips and corporate team building reservations for this spring. After Memorial day the program will also offer summer day camps for kids and paddling classes. Teams who wish to make a reservation can start working with a DUNEiversity Adventure Planner at their website, DUNEiversity.com.