

February 10, 2017 11:58AM

Co-op supports home-schooling families

Fort Leavenworth Learning Inspired Through Exploration Home-school Co-op met Feb. 2 at Harrold Youth Center.

Christopher Burnett | Staff Writer

Fort Leavenworth Learning Inspired Through Exploration Home-school Co-op met Feb. 2 at Harrold Youth Center. Known by the initials, LITE, the cooperative is led and administrated by participating parents as a supplemental homeschool education experience.

Sierra Linton, a home-schooling parent, said that the LITE home-school concept used on post allows students to interact socially with other children during a variety of learning activities.

“I assist the other parents in our group with developing various programs for the children,” Linton said. “We put together activities for home-schooled children that take advantage of the great facilities and resources available at Harrold Youth Center.”

Harrold Youth Center houses a 9,000-square-foot multi-purpose gym, a dance studio, technology lab and homework center, a television lounge and a game room.

LITE meets on Thursdays from 11:15 a.m to 2:15 p.m. in Harrold Youth Center at 45 Biddle Blvd. In addition to supporting LITE, the center sponsors age-appropriate activities and youth leadership and development programs.

Linton’s daughter, Scarlett, an 8-year-old home-schooled student, said that she enjoyed coming to the youth center. She was sitting with a group of other students building a tower using toothpicks and miniature marshmallows.

“This activity helps use our imagination,” Scarlett said describing her construction. “Mine is for animals. The supplies for horses are on the second floor, things for birds and fish are on the third floor and you checkout on the top floor.”

Diana Ausmus, another parent who has been with the co-op for two years, said the Fort Leavenworth LITE program is the only group in the area that is free. She said that families with authorization to access resources on post are eligible to participate in the home-school co-op.

“The organization varies in size due to the transient nature of our being military home-school families. But, this has been a real community for my family and not just a reason to get out of the house,” Ausmus said. “The co-op nature of LITE brings the kids together in meaningful and constructive ways through our activities and classes. They often develop lasting friendships.”

Ausmus said that the LITE Home-school Co-op is simply intended to supplement an existing home-schooling situation.

“We’ve had as many as 40 families participating in our co-op, to as few as just two families. But, it’s always interesting and lots of fun,” Ausmus said. “We are at the growing stage in participation again, and I would like to encourage any interested families to contact us by e-mail or through our closed Facebook group.”

All home-schools are classified as non-accredited private schools in Kansas and must follow the regulations set forth by law. Kansas does not specifically authorize “home instruction” or “homeschooling” by state statute.

However, Kansas does recognize non-accredited private schools. There is no fee charged to register a non-accredited private school.

A non-accredited elementary or secondary private school is one that satisfies the state’s compulsory school attendance laws, but which is not accredited by the State Board of Education.

Families with questions about home schooling or the area school systems should contact School Liaison Officer Jessica Brushwood at 684-1655. To contact the LITE co-op, e-mail to LITEHomeschoolCoop@yahoo.com.



PHOTO/ PRUDENCE SIEBERT, FORT LEAVENWORTH LAMP

Home-schooler 8-year-old Scarlett Linton finishes the top level of her “horse supply and pet store” during an activity using marshmallows and toothpicks to build structures Feb. 2 at Harrold Youth Center. The LITE (Learning Inspired Through Exploration) Co-op home-school group meets from 11:15 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. every Thursday at Harrold Youth Center. Classes and activities for children ages 4-12 are taught by parents and outside instructors. For more information, call 684-1655. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

