Goal Setting

Activity: **Making and Keeping Goals**
Audience: 6th – 8th graders
Time Required: 10 – 15 minutes
Location: Outside

Objective: Participants will
- understand the difference between goals and dreams.

Life Skills: Achieving Goals, decision making, communication, teamwork,

Materials: Live worms in small containers with soil and air holes. One worm per three people. Dig the worms from the local area so you are working only with the species found locally. Release the worms back in the area where they were found. (Digging up the worms could be part of the activity if time permits. Part of their goal setting could include how and where to find the worms, and how to safely extract them from the soil.)
Poster board, Markers

Overview: Participants are given worms and the goal of coming up with a plan to keep the worms alive. They compare goals with dreams and analyze what might interfere with their goals.

Preparation: Write the following inspirational sayings on paper and hang them around the room—make as decorative as you wish!
- Goals are dreams with deadlines.
- The difference between goals and dreams is the work.

Do the Activity: Define the term goal for the group. Explain or say:
Goals are ideas about how your future will look. Do you want to pass math, get along with your brother, or get a new computer? These are goals. But how do you make goals turn into something that really happens? The difference is the planning and work!

Divide participants into teams of three each. Give each team a worm in a small box of dirt. Also give teams poster board and markers. Instruct teams to write or draw the things they need to do to keep the worms alive for the next three days. How will they achieve this goal?

After they have finished, let teams present ideas, or plan. Ask the rest of the group these questions after each presentation:

- Is their plan realistic?
- Do they have the resources to keep the worm alive?
- Do they want to achieve this goal?
- Do they have a plan that will keep the worm alive?

Let the participants implement their plans for the next 3 days, otherwise release them back to their habitat.

Reflect

Ask Participants:

- What did you learn by doing this?
- How could you tell others about what you know about goals and dreams?

Summary

Point out some of the inspirational phrases hung around the room, and discuss them with the group. They should understand that achieving goals means planning and doing work!

To think about: What if worms die? If kept out of direct sunlight at room temperature and given slightly moist dirt and air, worms should live for several days. If they die, let participants figure out why. What was missing from the plan? How can they do better goal planning in the future?

Apply

Ask each person to close their eyes and visualize a big goal they have. It might be going to college, driving a car, or becoming a hair stylist. When participants have these goals firmly in mind, ask the following questions:

- Will your dream take a lot of work?
- Name some things that might interfere with your goal? (poor decisions like smoking, drinking, spending money unwisely rather than saving for the goal, misbehaving and getting suspended from school)
- How does wellness affect your goals? (For example, it is easier to meet your goals if you're physically fit, eat healthy foods, positive attitude about life, etc.)

Suggest that participants discuss their goals for life with their parents or other adults in their home. Make goals visual....write them down and post them where they can be seen in their room or on the refrigerator. They might set aside some time once a week to talk about their progress toward that goal.