

Camp Einstein focuses on STEAM-based learning for youngsters



Cristina Dycus, 8, of Beaumont, and Elizabeth Lacock, 8, of Redlands, test out their sail design before the race, during enjoy the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside annual overnight camp at Burrage Mansion, Camp Einstein. The camp focuses on STEAM — science, technology, engineering, arts and math - education, on July 2. PHOTO BY FRANK PEREZ

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Nariyah Bell, 8, of San Bernardino, sticks a note to the “What I Learned Today” paper, during the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside annual overnight camp at Burrage Mansion, Camp Einstein. The camp focuses on STEAM — science, technology, engineering, arts and math — education, on July 2. PHOTO BY FRANK PEREZ

REDLANDS -- The objective: Build a wind-powered car.

Using materials such as Legos, index cards and a bit of creativity, eight young girls put their heads together to create vehicles that could travel in windy conditions at the Burrage Mansion.

The activity was one of the assignments given Friday to two dozen girls between the ages of 7 and 14 during Camp Einstein, a four-day, three-night camp focused on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education and team-building. The girls camp began Thursday and ends Sunday; a camp for boys is planned July 21-24. Both camps are sponsored by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside.

Melissa Anderson, a third-grade educator at Kingsbury Elementary, led the building exercise Friday in one room of the historic Burrage Mansion, while in another, campers attended a lesson on science and music.

Anderson’s students took their lesson seriously, but her overall goal was to make it fun.

“When I was offered the opportunity I thought it would be a unique experience over the summer to try to give them an enriched experience,” she said. “A lot of times our brains go dead over the (break), and this is a pretty cool camp.”

VIDEO: The race is on!

As building commenced, Anderson and camp counselor Alexis Carter hung banners of support. One banner titled “Engineering Expectations” gave six tips to success: Focus on the task; everyone participates; consider all ideas; use “group work” voices; materials are tools, not toys; don’t give up.

“A lot of times girls don’t choose science-oriented or math-oriented careers,” Anderson said, “but I think it’s interesting to teach them to persevere and be creative with their thoughts. STEM is becoming the new way to go, and so, technology and engineering is job security in the future.”

Jo Bohlman, a site director of the Boys & Girls Clubs’ Mentone site, agreed.

“At our site we’ve piloted a program where what (researchers) learned after 20 years is girls spatially are not as advanced as boys are, which is one reason why they’re not interested in STEM-type of stuff. So we’re hoping staff can encourage that with the girls here,” she said.

In addition to STEM-based learning, campers also are taking on outdoor recreation activities like rock climbing and hiking. Activities start daily around 7 a.m.

To learn more about Camp Einstein or the Boys & Girls Clubs, go to www.begreatie.org or call 909-798-4599.