

# Camp Einstein launches kids' creativity at Burrage Mansion

- By DINA COLUNGA Reporter, Redlands Community News

One of Redlands' best hidden treasures is the Burrage Mansion, tucked away near Smiley Heights in a world of its own.

On Thursday and Friday, July 11 and 12, children got to spend the night at the Burrage Mansion as a part of Camp Einstein.

Camp Einstein is put together every summer by the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Redlands-Riverside for kids ages 7 to 14. There is a boys camp and a girls camp offered on different days.

On Thursday, July 11, during the girls camp, campers and employees of Camp Einstein filled the many rooms and grass fields of the mansion.

The activity of the afternoon? Bottle rockets.

Using 2-liter Minute Maid lemonade bottles, paper towel rolls, tennis balls and a whole lot of duct tape, 15 girls designed rockets in an air-conditioned historical room — a welcome camp activity away from the 98 degree weather.

The girls cut out fins for their rockets using manilla folders, while innocent gossip floated around the room.

“Do you still sleep with stuffed animals?” asked one girl to another.

“Did you bring your bathing suit?” one excited camper wanted to know.

The girls in the room spanned from ages 7 to 10.

For older kids, the Boys & Girls Club has a volunteer program or a junior staff program where teens are paid to help run activities.

After everyone was finished designing their rockets, the group moved outside for the launching ceremony.

Each group of girls took turns as they used a bike pump as their own version of Cape Canaveral: 3...2...1... liftoff!

Besides rockets, the girls also were able to build Lego Mars rovers, which they programmed themselves and control using iPads.

When it got dark, the Redlands Elks Lodge brought over four telescopes for campers to use to stargaze.

Boys & Girls Club Development Director Joy Juedes says the Elks Lodge obtained a grant so they could buy the telescopes for the camp.

“The Elks Lodge also asked to do our Back to School Shopping Spree,” said Juedes.

As a part of their stargazing nights for both the boys and girls camp, local astronomer Bill Patton brought his large telescope to the mansion and spoke to the kids about the planets and stars.

The Burrage Mansion was built in 1901 by oil tycoon and philanthropist Albert Burrage. Burrage wanted to escape the cold winters of the East Coast and have a vacation home where he could host parties.

Through the years, the mansion has also been used as a convent and venue for weddings and receptions.

Now, it only serves children in need.

Redlands native Tim Rochford bought the property in 2007, wanting to protect the grounds from demolition and make sure the mansion was being used for noncommercial business.

Rochford specifically wanted the Burrage Mansion to be a place where disadvantaged local children could be exposed to enrichment activities and events.

Though Camp Einstein has many fans and local supporters, the operation used to be much bigger.

Loss of funding over the years has made the camp downsize.

Juedes says the program used to receive thousands of dollars in funding from the Los Angeles Times Family Fund run by the Robert R. McCormick Foundation. However the Los Angeles Times shifted its interests to homelessness in Los Angeles and so the funding to the Boys & Girls Club was lost.

Now much of the expenses for running programs like Camp Einstein comes from the Boys & Girls Club's own pocket.

Instead of the weeklong camp they had with funding, now Camp Einstein is only four days.

The Boys & Girls Club has 31 sites in the Redlands and Riverside area and serves more than 3,000 children with their after-school programs and events and activities.

### **Want to join the club?**

Ages 5 to 18 who are in kindergarten to 12th grade can join for \$25 per year.

Membership forms can be found online or at the Redlands Administrative Office at 1251 Clay St.