

CE hosts Magic of STEM for teens

Nearly 30 local high school students discovered the magic of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) this summer as part of a week-long, all-expense-paid camp hosted by the Lee College Center for Workforce and Community Development.

Funded through a grant from the Texas Workforce Commission Governor's Summer Merit Program, The Magic of STEM Camp was designed for participants to learn how science impacts their daily lives. Campers conducted hands-on experiments in the chemistry and biology labs; tested their engineering mettle by programming robots; explored aviation, computer technology, and computer-aided design and drafting with Lee College instructors; and toured the on-campus pilot plant, which is modeled after the facilities found at real-world petrochemical plants and refineries throughout the area. At the end of the camp, students put their new-found skills and knowledge to practice in team competitions against their peers, with prizes awarded to the winners.

"Our instructors and community partners really stepped to the forefront to make the camp a success," said Kimberlee Whittington, director of Community Education, noting the guidance and involvement of the college's federal Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) STEM grant staff was particularly helpful. "They generously volunteered their time to ensure the campers had an enjoyable and fulfilling experience during their week on our campus."

The Magic of STEM campers also networked with professionals like NASA engineer Jessie Craft, who showed them how pursuing a STEM education could help build a solid foundation from which to achieve their goals.

"I learned new things about careers I didn't even know existed," said Ja'Von Green, a junior at Goose Creek Memorial High School and an avid gamer now considering a future in video game development and design after attending camp.

The Magic of STEM Camp will return in summer 2016. For more information or to be put on the waiting list, contact the Center for Workforce and Community Development at 281.425.6311.