

Researcher Mingxia Liu demonstrates a technique in the molecular pathology lab for Sabrina Sims (foreground) and fellow SciTech participants.

CAMP IMMERSES STUDENTS IN SCIENCE

BY LAYLA GARMS THE CHRONICLE

year-old Twelve Akshat Dixit dreams of becoming an engineer or computer scientist.

Akshat, a rising eighth grader at Hanes Middle School, and nearly 100 of his peers are getting a closer look at those and other STEM (science, engineering, technology, math) careers this summer through the SciTech Camp.

"This is my first time (at the camp). It's been really fun," said Akshat. "We've been to a lot of exciting places like SciWorks, and we got to work with lots of robotics and lots of chemistry and math. I've made a lot of friends, too."

Born of a partnership between Winston-Salem State University and Wake Forest University's Innovation Quarter (for-merly Piedmont Triad Research Park), SciTech has grown fourfold from its initial attendance of 25 students in 2006. The camp is designed to expose students in sixth through 10th grades to high-tech many careers Winston-Salem has to offer, explained Dr. Denise Johnson, associate professor of education at WSSU and director of the program.

"We really want kids

know that there's a place for them in the Winston -Salem economy and that their math and science skills will be used in their careers," said the Lexington native.

The weeklong program, which ran June 24-28, is supported by sponsors and offered to students for a nominal fee of \$10, Johnson said. One of the camp's chief objec-

tives is to reach underrepresented youth who might not traditionally have access to summer enrichment programs, she explained. Camp leaders worked closely with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the Housing Authority to identify potential participants, in addition to advertising the program to the broader community. The result was a group of campers from a broad cross-section of the socioeconomic spectrum.

Caleb Pledger, a rising eighth grader at Summit School, hopes to become a doctor or dentist someday. Caleb, the third of four children and a member of the math club at his school, described SciTech as "wonderful."

"I'm really into math, so it's teaching me more algebraic equations and variables," he said.



SciTech participants Maya Grimes (left) and Kayla Sandiford.

Akshat Dixit

Jarel Henry

math and science fun and

not boring, said Maya, a

student at Southeast

Middle School and aspir-

ing dentist who is in her

second year with the

camp. "...I think every

year it gets better because

you do different things

and you learn new

Jarel Henry heard about

SciTech from his older

brother, Devin, who

attended a couple of

years ago, and said he

was eager to experience it

for himself. Jarel, who

hopes to become an

entrepreneur someday,

said the camp did not dis-

my expectations. I've

learned many things. I

learned how to graph and

how to work through

slope and the field trips

are very fun also," said

Jarel, a two sport athlete.

"I would recommend it to

other kids. If you want to

have fun and meet new

people and learn new

you

should

"It's been more than

year-old

things."

appoint.

things,

Thirteen

"I like that they made



Caleb Pledger

The students visited IQ (Innovation Quarter) last week, where they learned about pathology molecular (which focuses on the study and diagnosis of disease through the examination of molecules within organs, tissues or bodily fluids) and heard from IQ President Dr. Eric Tomlinson. Over the course of the week, they designed rockets and wind turbines, participat-

ed in lab experiments, and honed their math and sciskills. ence Kayla Sandiford said she enjoyed the active approach the camp curriculum took to learning.

"It's

been



Garcia

Johnson

good," said the Paisley IB Magnet School student. "They don't make you sit through lectures. It's all very hands-on." The students

took field trips to SciWorks, Out of Our Minds animation studio in Winston-Salem, NC State University, the Downtown Health Plaza, Guilford Technical Community College and

Duke Energy's Belews Creek Stream Station. "I hope that they'll appreciate science and enjoy it more," said WSSU alumnus Bobby Garcia, the science coordinator for the camp. "Hopefully, they'll see that science is really fun and it's a part of every-

thing." The SciWorks trip was a highlight for Maya Grimes, 13.

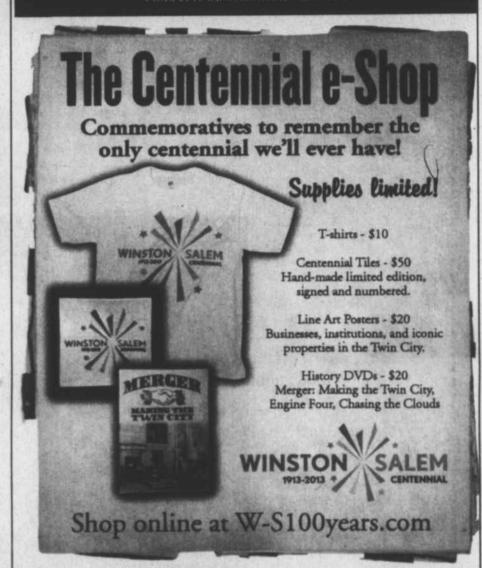


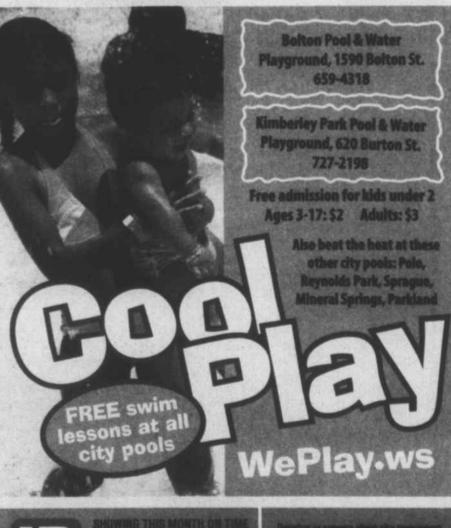
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