

Local second grader keeps pace with high school students at virtual STEM program

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs have steadily become more popular as the demand for jobs in that area have increased. Recently, the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) held a virtual activities day for engineering week on Saturday, Feb. 27.

The program was targeted toward NSBE Jr. and pre-college students to expose them to STEM education. What was most remarkable about the virtual event was the fact that one of the participants was only in second grade. Not only was she able to comprehend the subject matter,

well with this program, because they have seen her strong points. The good thing about them is that they cater to each child's strengths."

Bowman was surprised at how well Harmony picked up the material during the Zoom call.

"In the first assignment they did, it was something that she already likes to do, which was slime, because you're taking different materials and building something with polymers and things of that nature," she continued. "When it got a little more intense, when it came to building infrastructure and seeing if it could sustain, I was like, 'Oh my God, kid, you're

her daughter. She realizes many of the new jobs in the market are geared toward those in the areas of STEM.

"I love it because in this day and time, the best jobs are in STEM," Bowman stated. "Quite often, you don't see too many children of color going into STEM. Just seeing that she does well with it, is something I am ecstatic to see, and I am hoping that not only she, but other children, will be inspired and say, 'I can try this too.'"

"I don't think a lot of kids realize that making slime is a science, but it is. Building infrastructure around the house and using materials to make and shape things is a part of STEM. So, I think it's exciting and it's something I'm excited for her to go towards and build a great career and future. I told her, 'Baby, you are mommy's hidden figure. I will

see you at NASA.'"

Bowman stated she recommends more minority children participate in the STEM field because of the many opportunities that are present.



Submitted photo

Second grade student, Harmony Bowman, participated in a STEM event designed for high school students.

she more than kept pace with the older participants in the event.

The activities in the event included: create your own slime, an egg drop, earthquake simulations, and more. Young Harmony Bowman, the second-grade student, jumped in headfirst with the projects during the five-hour event.

"Children were able to log in and learn about the different functionalities of engineering and STEM," said Emerald Bowman, Harmony's mother. "Harmony logged in and when she first logged in to do some of the first session, she was the only second grader and the rest were high school students.

"They were led by young teachers on Zoom doing different projects. They had the students thinking outside of the box and building different things and different infrastructure."

Bowman stated that Harmony's strongest subjects in school are math and science, so the NSBE activities' day was right up her alley.

"What's awesome is being that she does go to the recreation center, especially prior to COVID, she's surrounded by adults there that see her talent," Bowman stated. "The positive is Serena Mumford and Bryant McCorkle shared this particular program and said, 'I think Harmony could really do

kind of smart,' because I didn't think that she would know how to build an infrastructure that would last and not fall and she figured it out on her own."

Because Harmony was able to catch on so quickly, Bowman stated that she was impressed with her daughter. "She kind of took me aback when it went to the other activities," Bowman continued. "So, I knew then that it was important that I continue to push that because it seems like something she enjoys."

Bowman stated she wants to keep her daughter involved with STEM activities in the future. Since the virtual activities' day, Bowman recalled a game Harmony plays on her laptop where she must build structures from the ground up and realizes Harmony has a knack for STEM activities.

"This is something I really want her to pursue," she said about her daughter. "I even talked to the young lady who was in charge of the program on Zoom and I've asked her to send me information on NSBE. We are not a part of the chapter, but I really would like this to continue because right now, this is the time where her cognitive skills can really advance and grow."

To be a young female African American that is interested in STEM makes Bowman very proud of

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Rec Center holds series of events for teens

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The pandemic has caused a lot of people to feel various degrees of cabin fever, especially kids. Adults were able to go to work to get out of the house, but most kids were not so lucky. Realizing there was a need for teen entertainment, the City of Winston-Salem connected with the W.R. Anderson Recreation Center for a series of events to entertain young adults.

The events are for teens ages 13-19 and will take place every two weeks at the rec center. The first event to get things kicked off was an open mic night that took place on Feb. 23. The second event was a kid friendly "sip and paint" where the kids got the chance to show their artistic side.

Upcoming events are a career day, canned food drive, professional day preparation, and a tour of Winston-Salem State University. Kayla Garrett, from the City of Winston-Salem, spearheaded the events in coordination with W.R. Anderson Senior Supervisor Bryant McCorkle.

"She (Garrett) wanted to do a program for teens to have a positive outlet to go after school and have resources to do better at life," said McCorkle. "She thought during the pandemic this would be good, because everyone is leaving out the teenagers. This is a

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