

Kids Tech University at VSU

HERMON MACLIN

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The goal of Kids Tech University is to spark interest and excitement about Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM disciplines) in children between the ages of 9-12, according to Albert Reid, 4-H specialist at Virginia State University. I had the pleasure of attending KTU last Saturday and it was a real treat watching hundreds of kids faces light up with enthusiasm. The session, "Why Is Antarctica So "Cool" To Geologists?" was led by Cristina Millan, Ph.D. student in the School of Earth Sciences at Ohio State University. She actually works in Antarctica as a member of the ANDRILL research team as part of her studies at the university. She said that this was her first time talking to kids but she handled the students like a real pro! Christina said; "I try to mix things that are more of everyday life that I know they enjoy more."

Kids Tech University is a 4-H Youth Development program of Virginia Cooperative Extension that's designed to spark children's interest in STEM disciplines but Marcus Comer, Extension Specialist at VSU said; "We want to add another letter to STEM making it STEAM with the "A" standing for agriculture because we really need to promote agriculture with our youth today." After talking with KTU student, Kennedy Phillips, I can say mission accomplished, as Kennedy told me; "I had lots of fun today and I want to study



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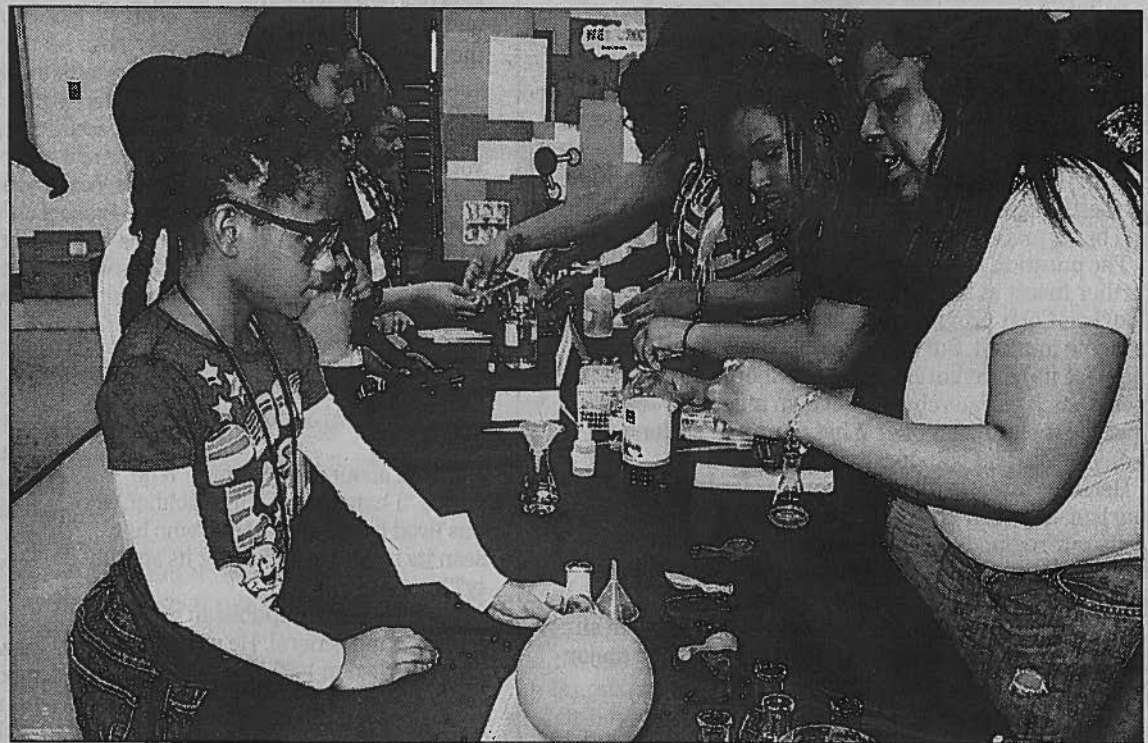
By Hermon Maclin

animal science at Virginia Tech!"

Kids Tech University took place at Virginia State University to stimulate interest in science and technology and to familiarize children with the college atmosphere. "The children are really excited about KTU and about becoming scientist," said Crystal Tyler-Mackey, Extension Specialist. They interacted with graduate and undergraduate students at the university and participated in activities designed to motivate children to transform learning into doing.

KTU student, Malik Crews said; "The lecture was interesting and there's lots of cool stuff in Antarctica." The program put engineers and scientist in front of children encouraging them to explore and get excited about science, engineering, technology, and mathematics. "I really liked the exhibits and experiments... I like exploring and it makes me feel more comfortable doing hands-on experiments," said Maurik Crews. The idea is not to teach the children but instead, get them excited about science and technology by sharing genuine enthusiasm with real scientist.

"This is the second Kids Tech University at VSU and we



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The 4-H group of kids (above and below) interacted with graduate and undergraduate students at the university and participated in activities designed to motivate children to transform learning into doing. Kids Tech University took place at Virginia State University to stimulate interest in science and technology and to familiarize children with the college atmosphere.

have had some really exciting scientists and activities so far" said VSU Extension Specialist Debbie Jones. Children took part in the virtual labs and forums after the all-day event. "I liked the part where we talked about the penguins and the earth's crust... I want to be a Marine Scientist!" said Evan Tyler. His brother Aaron spoke up saying; "This makes being a scientist sound like fun!" This is good to hear because one of our National 4-H initiatives is to create millions of new scientists. Kids Tech University is part of that effort. If you didn't get involved in KTU for the fall semester, be sure to contact Albert Reid at Virginia State University - 804 524 5495 or contact your local 4-H Office to find out how to enroll in the next Kids Tech University at VSU.

Hermon Maclin is an Extension Agent, specializing in 4-H Youth Development with the Prince George office of the Virginia Cooperative Extension.

