

WHITTIER DAILY NEWS

Experimental summer

July 16, 2005

Tracy Garcia , Staff Writer

(Staff Photo by Keith Durlinger) Volunteer Craig Borden helps out Stephanie Jimenez (left) and Mariah Montero, 9, of Downey, as they took apart a computer and were putting it back together for the Computers and Automation class during the 14th Annual Boeing Summer Science Camp at Pioneer High School in Whittier on Friday July 15, 2005. About 550 students have 23 classes to choose from in the summer science camp.

WEST WHITTIER -- Over the next three weekends, Pioneer High School will transform into a world of science.

Students will learn about rocket launches, flight simulators, computers, the human body and the environment.

It's all part of the 14th annual Boeing Summer Science Camp 2005.

The intense K-12 academy is being held at Pioneer High School for the first time this year. State Sen. Martha Escutia, D- Norwalk, whose children participated in the program last year, helped bring it to Pioneer, officials said.

When Escutia heard the organizers were looking for a venue, she wrote to the Whittier Union High School District to ask if there was any way district officials could accommodate the six-day Boeing academy.

The academy takes place at Pioneer from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays for the rest of this month a schedule that works well around Pioneer's Monday-through-Thursday summer school programs.

"The Summer Science Camp is a great way to get students interested in science and mathematics through experiential learning," said district Superintendent Sandy Thorstenson.

"We are pleased we can support the event and thrilled the participants hail from our own schools and partner elementary districts."

Nearly 550 students from 98 Southern California cities registered for the academy, including dozens from Whittier, La Mirada, West Covina, El Monte, Pasadena, San Gabriel, San Marino, Alhambra and Arcadia.

For \$75 each, students can participate in a variety of hands-on science workshops such as astronomy, automation, forensics and robotronics a combination of robotics and electronics.

The academy also offers early morning math enrichment classes that require students to be on campus by 6:45 a.m.

"The classes are meant just to get the students excited about math and science,' said academy organizer Marie Mungaray. "We're trying to give them a year of science in six days.'

By the time the science camp is over students will have learned about such subjects as the human body, the plant life cycle, environmental approaches to chemistry and biology, or what it takes to launch rockets, solder electronic devices and develop a flight simulator.

"I was here last year, partly because my mom forced me to come,' said Judy Song, 13, of Cypress, as her classmates giggled. "But I met lots of friends and it was really fun, and I wanted to come back this year.

"Honestly, I'm not a science person, but I'm fascinated with astronomy and the stars,' the teenager added. "Science in general is boring to me, but this is fun. You get to experiment with stuff.'

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