

Campers pilot drones at STEM camp

Submitted by
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Six Jefferson County youth were among 32 middle schoolers from eight North Florida counties who became enthusiastic drone pilots during North Florida College's STEM (Science, Engineering, Technology, Math) SEALs (Sea, Air, and Land remotely operated vehicle design challenges) Camp held July 11-16.

"While it may have looked like all fun and play, campers were guided through a rigorous program, while they learned about remotely operated vehicles," said Monticello resident Dr. Guenter Maresch, NFC Physics, Astronomy & Mathematics Instructor, Physical and Biological Sciences Department Chair. "The work included science, mathematics and technology. The students were highly engaged throughout the week because they knew at the end they would compete



Photo Courtesy

Students from many area schools gathered for this years NFC STEM SEAL Summer Camp.



Photo Courtesy

Monticello students attended the NFC STEM SEAL Summer Camp.

individually or in teams against each other with the devices they made and the knowledge and skills they acquired.”

Students learned computer code, assembled drone attachments and remote controllers to test and fly drones. Their mission was to train and improve their flight skills and code the drones to fly autonomously through various obstacle courses, culminating with the remote-controlled rescue of an astronaut stranded on an asteroid.

Floyd Faglie, parent of camper Benjamin Faglie, said, “This is a great program offered by NFC. It is challenging for the kids, but the NFC Staff and volunteers are outstanding, and the kids are totally engaged.”

The hands-on experience began in NFC’s Morris G. Steen Jr. Science Learning Center and was led by Dr. Maresch; Lura Murfee, Project Coordinator for the NSF STEM SEALs Camp; Dr. Chris Bacot, Professor of Biology; and fourteen area educators. The teachers worked extensively with the NFC team throughout the year to create and prepare the camp.

On the last day of camp, Saturday, July 16, students participated in a STEM competition event with the enthusiasm of a football game in the Colin P. Kelly Fitness and Wellness Center. Parents, grandparents and students cheered on the final competition, which included obstacle course races and elimination strategy games. Here are the results:

The STEM SEALs Camp is a three-part project funded by the National Science Foundation and supported by Tri-County Electric Cooperative. The purpose of the project is to develop and test methods for improving STEM education for middle school students in rural communities.

“The NFC team works closely with a research group in North Carolina as well as design and review teams, which consist of local middle school teachers who currently teach science, mathematics or technology courses. The work of all of us together culminates in a weeklong Summer Institute,” added Maresch.

The STEM SEALs Camp introduces students to electric motors, sensors, microprocessors, coding, collaboration, problem solving and critical thinking. Careers in the STEM field include but are not limited to mechanical engineer, computer software engineer, aerospace engineer, robotics engineer or environmental engineer.

For more information about NFC or the STEM SEALs Program, call (850) 973-1660 or email sappl@nfc.edu.

**Rec Park begins
flag football and**

Autonomous Competition Events: These events showcased the student's ability to create, understand, and utilize code to program the drone to run autonomously.

Earth to Mars:

- 1st: Boone Riley / Lafayette County
- 2nd: Riley Sanborn / Columbia County

To Mars and Back:

- 1st: Ashton Hart / Lafayette County
- 2nd: Colt King / Madison County

Asteroid Mission:

- 1st: JG Livermore / Hamilton County
- 2nd: Karan Komuroji / Leon County

Orbit the Asteroid:

- 1st: Mae McNeill / Jefferson County
- 2nd: Benjamin Faglie / Jefferson County

Remote-controlled Events: These events showcased the student's agility when flying the drone with a remote control.

Orbit the Asteroid:

- 1st: Max Jimenez / Jefferson County
- 2nd: Colt King / Madison County

Rescue Mission:

- 1st: Benjamin Faglie / Jefferson County
- 2nd: Thomas Schautz / Hamilton County

Team Drone Battle:

1st Place Team:

- Daylee Lloyd / Taylor County
- Skylar Slaughter / Taylor County
- Noah Marier / Suwannee County
- Will Borders / Jefferson County**

Flag Football and cheerleading signup

Laura Young
ECB Publishing, Inc.

Registration is going on now for the Flag Football and Cheerleading programs at the Jefferson County Recreation Park. Youth aged 5 to 16 years are invited to sign up for either program just \$20 for the season. To register, stop by the park office at 1380 Mamie Scott Dr. between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. or call Park Director Mike Holm at (850) 519-6640. Extended sign-up hours are being offered on Friday, Aug. 26, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the park. Games begin the first week of October.

Games for the 5 to 8 year olds will be scheduled on Thursday evenings; games for 8 to 12 year olds and 12 to 16 year olds will be scheduled on Tuesday evenings. The 8 and 12 year olds will have the option of which group they want to play with.

Flag football develops skills in running, flag-pulling, throwing, catching, handoffs, snapping, defense, routes and positions. Cheerleading develops balance, coordination, dexterity, endurance, flexibility, rhythm and strength. Both sports teach valuable social skills through teamwork as well. Sign up today!