

**Blast Off, Dig In, and Wild Times at Rotary Planetarium!**

The Wadesboro Rotary Planetarium and Science Center held its annual three week session of Science Summer Camps during the month of August. The first week of camp was a real blast with students learning things that were Out of This World. During the week campers learned about the Curiosity Mars Rover that was going to land later in the week. They also built a refracting telescope as well as constructing two types of model rockets. Each student was able to construct their own and a comparison was made following the launching of the rockets as to which type of rocket yielded the greatest amount of altitude. The field trip of the week was to Chapel Hill, NC to visit the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center. The students were able to participate in hands-on chemical experiments that were conducted in several workshops in the Science Center. They were able to enjoy the new digital planetarium show which has turned the Planetarium into more of an omnivision theater.

The second week of camp was Under the Sea and it was certainly not for the squeamish! Campers did a study of life under the sea and discussed how and where different types of marine animals and shore life made their home. Probably one of the smelliest activities was the dissection of the squid. For many students dissecting was a new adventure. Care was taken to explain all the proper procedures for handling the intricate dissecting tools and practice was first done by dissecting a starfish before undertaking the stinky squid. Students were amazed to find out that starfish actually take and force their stomachs out of their body to eat. When they were able to handle the squid, students had to be careful not to puncture its ink sac or a black mess would fill the entire body cavity. If they were able to survive the dissection without the puncture, students were given toothpicks to use the ink to write their names on paper. It was amazing to see how far the ink would really write all over their paper. On the last day of camp students participated with the counselors dissecting a pregnant dogfish shark. The field trip for the week was to Raleigh, NC to visit the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and to check out their new technology wing, which was absolutely awesome according to the campers!

The third week of camp was On This Earth where students investigated life on this earth, in the water, and on the land, and how life adapts to changes. The first part of the week, students learned how to dissect an owl pellet. An owl pellet is the regurgitated remains of an owl's food all wrapped up in a tight ball of hair, usually from a rat or shrew. Campers used magnifiers, tweezers and probes to gently loosen the fur around the ball so various bones could be found within the pellet. Skeleton structures were attempted to see if they could figure out what type of rodent or bird the owl had eaten. Pellets are usually regurgitated on a daily basis. Later on in the week students learned about crayfish, where they are found, and yes, the same ones that folks eat! A crayfish dissection was used to learn about the different swimmerets on the abdomen of the crayfish and how they were similar to other shellfish found in the ocean. They were amazed at how some of the tiniest organisms have multiple hearts. During the week campers learned how to use a microscope and how to make a wet slide using a deep well slide. They had examined prepared slides of microscopic organisms (amoeba, paramecium, and euglena) that are found in water and also a study was discussed on flesh-eating bacteria as well. Campers brought in water from ponds and creeks near their own homes and a lengthy investigation was done using the various water samples as students made their own wet slides to discover microscopic organisms swimming in their water. The field trip this week was to the Riverbanks Zoo in Columbia, South Carolina. This zoo, which is quite different from the North Carolina Zoo in Asheboro, is more people friendly. The animals are exhibited in an up-close and personal way. Students had opportunities for close encounters with giraffes by feeding them and red kangaroos with a walk-through area in which you were only a few feet from the animals. Discussions were held on people friendly zoos versus animal friendly, habitat based zoos like the one in Asheboro. Following the zoo walk students packed their jaws with hamburgers and chicken sandwiches from Fuddrucker's in Columbia.

Each week of camp concluded with a cookout of hotdogs that students themselves over fire pits, and they made s'mores with graham crackers and marshmallows. This camp was the first group that has had the opportunity to use the new environmental classroom area. This area includes a large fenced in gravel area complete with picnic tables and fire pits, which was funded from the Wadesboro Rotary Club Education and a District Rotary Simplified Grant that was awarded the Wadesboro Rotary Club this year.



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