

# Summer Camps Make Learning Science And Math Fun

The Bonneville Power Administration sells electric power to Northwest utilities. But this summer it helped develop a different kind of power-brain power. BPA sponsored several science camps which helped make learning fun for Portland students.

"Hydromania" camps promoted science and math education to Portland children, with a focus on low-income and minority students. There were eight two-week sessions with 25 to 30 students per camp—a total of more than 200 students enrolled. The nine- to 11-year olds came from all academic levels, and the program was designed to meet their abilities.

"Kids are excited about the camps," Lolita Darby, a camp instructor who is also a fifth-grade teacher at King Elementary, said. "The hands-on activities need to become a part of the education system."

"Another focus is to pique girls' interest in science and math by time they enter the seventh grade," program director David Milam said. "It builds their self-esteem by having these skills."

"It seems like teachers think boys are stronger [in science and math] than us. I don't think this is so," fifth-grader Shasta Jones said.

"What is most exciting for me is to see their faces light up and say, 'I did it,'" Darby said.

BPA is part of the Department of Energy. DOE has an educational mission to establish urban and rural partnership programs in science and math.

DOE and BPA provided financial support for teachers, field trips and curriculum materials at the camps.

Portland Public Schools and the Park Bureau provided funding, facilities and services for the program.

"The program could not exist without collaborative help," Brant Crabbe, a BPA engineer who coordinated the Hydromania project, said.

A typical camp morning began with breakfast and a game. For example, the kids might learn to estimate by guessing how many marbles or M&M's were in a jar. Other activities throughout the day included a variety of educational projects. Students learned about the metric system. They worked with liquid volume by making their own graduated cylinder. They explored a drop of water and its characteristics.

Sometimes, there was a little magic involved. The students watched as an instructor lit a dollar bill which had been soaked in a mixture of water and alcohol. To their amazement, the alcohol burned but the money did not.

"My favorite thing to do is guess how much water is in a cup in milliliters and grams," fourth-grader Jomicia Strong said.

During a field trip to Westmoreland Park, the kids raced boats made from milk jugs and wooden dowels. The jugs were donated by Alpenrose Dairy.

During another field trip, this time to the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge north of Vancouver, Wash., students held a scavenger hunt and brought back soil and water samples to examine under a microscope. Another trip took students to the Warm Springs Indian Reservation, where campers learned about the importance of water and salmon to Native



Cutlines for Camps: Omar Chambers works on a watercolor during one of the camp's field trips. The camps promote science and math to low-income and minority students. (BPA photo by Sherry Lind)

Americans.

"My parents did not make me come—I wanted to," fifth-grader Sarah Jasper said. "The camps are fun and I learn a lot."

There were six instructors per camp: two certified teachers and a mix of college and high school students. The curriculum was written by Joan Moura and Rod Swerin, two Portland-area secondary school teachers.

Some of the camps had a special focus. One camp was set up specifically for Native American students.

Another, called El Club, was geared toward fist-through sixth-graders who speak Spanish at home. The main focus of El Club was the Hispanic culture and language, according to its director Gloria Rodriguez-Montgomery, a Portland bilingual teacher. DOE and BPA provided funding for the curriculum, materials and field trips, which were taught in Spanish. El Club's four two-week sessions attracted a total enrollment of nearly 200 at the Metropolitan Learning Center in Portland.

"Through its participation in the campus, BPA hopes to have a positive influence on the lives of all of the students," Crabbe said. "If we can do that, then in some small way we have also helped the community. We want to help the kids sense the success of accomplishment, feel good about themselves and know that they can do science. It would be great if we could stimulate their interest so that they might eventually find fulfilling careers in math, science and engineering. Who knows, some of them might even work for BPA one day!"

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## New Student Orientation Scheduled At Mt. Hood Community College

New students planning to attend Mt. Hood Community College this fall can get their questions answered, discuss career options, tour the campus and learn about the college's services and activities at the New Student Orientation on Saturday, Sept. 25, 9am to 3pm. The orientation will be divided into two tracks: one for recent high school graduates, the other for returning adult students.

At 9am, recent high school graduates will meet in the main College Theatre and returning adult students will meet in the Visual Arts Theatre. Both sessions will provide students with information about MHCC's services and activities, offer tours of campus facilities, and address subjects such as how to succeed in college.

Students attending are also invited to attend the Afterhours Programs on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 25-26.

Following the orientation session on Saturday, students have three Afterhours Program options: "College Center Casino," "Hidden Waterfall of the Columbia Gorge Hike," and "Sunset at Timberline."

College Center Casino offers blackjack, roulette and other games in the College Center from 3 to 6pm

Hidden Waterfalls of the Columbia Gorge Hike is a three-hour hike in the waterfalls area of the Gorge from 3 to 8pm. Preregistration is required.

Sunset at Timberline offers an opportunity to listen to minstrels in mountain meadows and watch the sunset near Timberline Lodge from 3 to 9pm. Preregistration is required.

On Sunday, students are invited to enjoy a whitewater rafting trip by participating in the "Wild Whitewater Festival," 7:30am to 7pm. No experience is necessary. A \$15 fee and preregistration is required.

For more information, or to register for Afterhours Programs, call the College Center at 667-7260

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