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Middle school students from the Portland area tour a research lab at Oregon State University in Corvallis as part of a black student access and success initiative that aims to create pathways to higher education and increase the retention and academic success of black students.

# Building Blocks to Success

Middle school kids get a true college experience

This summer, a group of middle school students from the Portland area got a true college experience at Oregon State University in Cor-

vallis as part of a black student access and success Initiative to create pathways to higher education, and to increase the retention and academic success of black students.

The OSU Educational Opportunities Program, in partnership with the College of Engineering and STEM Academy, partnered with Building Blocks 2 Success to bring the students to the campus

for an overnight camp.

The “Beaver Achievers” met with Dr. Charlene Alexander, a university vice president of color to hear about the importance of diversity in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). Current OSU students discussed the different paths they took to higher education and the different majors available in STEM at OSU. One OSU student of color

shared stories about the challenges and triumphs as a woman of color in the engineering field.

The younger students also got hands on experience. They were guided through STEM problem-solving tasks to design machines to solve some of today’s real-world problems; got the opportunity to tour some engineering research labs; and used “Activity-Bot 360” robot kits to build and

code a robot that is smart enough to make its way around a room on its own.

The ultimate aim of the OSU outreach was to build the next generation of black engineers at OSU.

Antonio Jackson, the director of Building Blocks 2 Success, said he plans to mentor and keep track of his students through high school graduation.