



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Zayne Read and dad, Jeremy, work on perfecting a cross bow-like device made with Q-tips and rubber bands.

MAKING ENGINEERING FUN

STEM night at Whitworth has kids make Q-tips, rubber band weapons

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Want to get a fourth- or fifth-grader excited about science and engineering? Give them a chance to build a bow and arrow or catapult.

OK, so not a real weapon of medieval warfare, but one made from Popsicle sticks, Q-Tips, rubber bands and tape.

That was the theme at Whitworth Elementary School's first Stem (science, technology, engineering and math) Night. Tables were set up with all the tools needed and examples of designs. Students, accompanied by their parents or older siblings, were given the green light to experiment.

"Launching" areas were set up for kids to test their inventions, firing Q-Tips or sticks at a target. They were



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Students test their "weapons" in the shooting range.

welcome to redesign their "weapons" or give another type a try.

Protective goggles were required for good measure.

"This is our second attempt at a catapult," said Sarah Bobeda, helping her son, Devon, with his creation. They were headed to

the launch area and Devon seemed excited to put his redesign to the test. They quickly disappeared into a line of kids waiting to shoot at the targets.

Halfway through the event, Whitworth Principal Darlene Geddes estimated about 75 kids were partici-

pating in Stem Night.

"We are really impressed with our first ever," Geddes said.

In fact, at the end of the hour, teacher Brian Williamson had to make announcements in the still-packed gym that it was time for students to take their projects — and parents — home.

Kids still were building and testing.

"That's what you want," said Whitworth teacher Jena Vessell, referring to the enthusiasm for the building task.

Vessell is on the school's leadership team that is trying to find ways to incorporate stem education into the classroom.

She's found that the hands-on learning projects are much better at tapping into students' creativity and curiosity.

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Mitchell takes job at Baker City High

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Central High School principal Greg Mitchell has accepted an offer to be the next principal at Baker City High, according to reports from the Baker City Herald.

Mitchell is expected to start in Baker City on July 1, the Herald reported.

Central Superintendent Buzz Brazeau said the district office has not yet received Mitchell's letter of resignation, but that is not uncommon while final contracts are sorted out. Brazeau expects to hear more from Mitchell in the next week or so, he said.

Generally, the time to recruit and hire a new high school principal is in February-March, he said.

"We're concerned because we're late in the process," Brazeau said.

"Our inkling will be to look at some interim solution for this year and a full-time solution next year," Brazeau said.

SCHOOL NOTES

Grace Christian to hold 'Kinder Quest'

DALLAS — Grace Christian School, 598 E. Ellendale, Dallas, is hosting an informational session about its kindergarten program on May 5 from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m.

During "Kinder Quest," prospective students and their parents can meet the teacher, learn about the curriculum, see the classroom and reserve a spot for the fall.

For more information, call 503-623-2777 or gracepreschool@graceindallas.org.

Robotics team places in top third

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — LaCreole Middle School's world champion qualifying robotics team Team Shift place 90th out of 300 teams during the Vex Robotics IQ World Championship tournament in Louisville, Ky. April 20-23.

Team members Kahl Murdock, Ryan Nguyen and Gavin Boyson were the first time to compete at the world level after earning the title at the Vex Robotic IQ Oregon State Championship in February.

Michelle Murdock, Kahl's mother said the trip was grueling, but an eye opening learning experience for the team.

"Our little town of Dallas made the incredible impression on the world this last week," Murdock said after returning last week. "Without our friends and family in community with the support none of this would have been possible."

Dallas VFW Post offers scholarships

DALLAS — The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 3203 announced the kick-off of the VFW and its Auxiliary's Voice of Democracy Scholarship and Patriot's Pen Essay competitions, where local students have the opportunity to compete for scholarships and a trip to Washington, D.C.

The Voice of Democracy Competition is open to high school students who must write and record a three- to five-minute essay on the theme, "My Responsibility to America," on an audio cassette tape or audio CD.

The Patriot's Pen Essay Competition is open to middle-school aged students in the Dallas area who must write a 300- to 400-word essay on the theme, "The America I Believe In." For more information: www.vfw.org/youth.



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