ENERGIZE YOUR MIND

4/1/16



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Tianna Guess and Jaden Guess tape decorative rain drops to a river banner to demonstrate how every drop counts at the World of Energy on Thursday.

World of Energy hosts series of events for kids

BY STEPHANIE JADRNICEK
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Kids kept their brains cranking over spring break by attending Energize Your Mind at Duke Energy's World of Energy.

In its second year, the program attracted even more students. About 40 to 60 kids participated every day, and Tuesday's turnout ranked the highest, drawing in 100 kids for a robotics demonstration.

The demo was led by Team 343 Metal in Motion, a group of high school students from Oconee County that creates engaging interactive learning opportunities for students in the areas of engineering and technology.

Addison Owens, 8, attended every program this week. She said the robotics demo was one of her favorites.

"They had a robot that shoots out T-shirts," she said. "It was so fun."

The main purpose of Energize Your Mind is to get kids pumped up for the iMAGINE Upstate festival in downtown Greenville on Saturday.

iMAGINE Upstate is a program of South Carolina's Coalition for Mathematics and Science at Clemson University, which

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Diane Myslik helps her grandson, Charlie Stout, color a rain drop during Thursday's Energize Your Mind program at the World of Energy.

ENERGIZE: Children enjoyed science activities at World of Energy

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emphasizes science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics innovation.

"At Duke Energy and the World of Energy, we're focused on promoting anything STEM-related, so science, technology, engineering and math, even the arts now," Duke Energy communications consultant Mikayla Kreuzberger said. "Everybody's calling it STEAM now instead of STEM by adding the 'A' for arts."

She said the goal of Energize Your Mind is to provide STEAM activities and educational opportunities for children to learn things they might not otherwise get to see, hear, do or touch.

On Monday, the Clemson Engineers for Developing Countries led the first program of the week. The organization works with local communities in Haiti to develop sustainable solutions that improve the quality of life for Haitians.

"They built solar panels for schools in Haiti, so that's what they did here," Kreuzberger said. "Each child built a classroom about the size of a shoebox. They decorated the classrooms and installed a battery and a solar panel in each one, then they got to light it."



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The kids loved Yucky Ducky at the World of Energy's Energize Your Mind program. He's a mascot for the Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District who leads his ducky army in the fight against pollution.

Owens liked this project, too. She said it was fun to decorate the classroom, and she liked putting the solar panel together and seeing her classroom light up inside.

But her favorite program took place on Wednesday. World of Energy staff prepared homemade ice cream with the kids. Owens said she has only made ice cream from scratch one other time in her life, so she enjoyed Wednesday's activities.

"We made vanilla," she said. "It was a little bit better than other ice cream, because it had a little bit more taste to it."

Energize Your Mind wrapped up on Thursday with a presentation from the Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District. Education program coordinator Lynn Pilewski and community relations coordinator Maddi Phillips taught the kids about storm water and how storm water pollutants can drain into local waterways and eventually to the ocean.

"We talked about pet waste, yard waste and chemicals such as pesticides, oil and litter, and how those can pollute the water," Phillips said.

The kids also played games. In one game, two children wove their way through a whole group of sitting kids, like water draining through the landscape.

As the moving children passed by, the sitting kids stuck sticky notes on them. The sticky notes represented pollutants to demonstrate how pollutants affect storm water runoff. By the end of the presentation, the young group of minds had grasped the concept of protecting the watershed.

"We like to open our activities up to young children to get them started thinking about different things early in life," Kreuzberger said. "Every time they come to the World of Energy and have fun while they learn, it encourages them to come back again."

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