

Kids Become Inventive At SUNY Canton Camp

CANTON - More than 80 children from across New York state are letting their creative sides run wild at SUNY Canton as part of a week-long day camp focused on innovation and hands-on learning.

Camp Invention, a program of Invent Now, is underway on the College's campus and will conclude on Friday. The camp is being held in the North Country for the first time and is for students entering grades one through six.

The program includes themed modules where they will work in teams and explore, discover and create solutions to certain problems. Participants will have a chance to present their findings and inventions to family and friends at an Inventors' Showcase at the end of the week.

Participants hail from at least 12 local school districts including Canton, Clifton-Fine, Gouverneur, Hermon-DeKalb, Heuvelton, Lisbon, Madrid-Waddington, Norwood-Norfolk, Parishville-Hopkinton, Ogdensburg, Massena, and Potsdam. Students have traveled from as far away as Buffalo to take

part in the program.

Before registration opened earlier in the spring, organizers were told to expect around 30 students to sign up since the camp is new to the area, but enrollment skyrocketed and nearly tripled the original estimate.

"The number of students in the program being held at SUNY Canton far exceeds the expected numbers for a program in its first year," said Lori Byrne, senior regional program manager at Invent Now.

Camp Invention Director April Barnes, a teacher at Potsdam High School and a cross country coach, is being assisted by four teachers, five camp counselors, and several parent volunteers who are helping with the many young forward-thinkers.

"We have a wonderful team of enthusiastic educators who will help teach the children math and science in an innovative and a hands-on way," Barnes said. "We are just as excited as the kids are about the week."

Interested parents and students made sure to keep this week open in their busy summer plans. "We decided to

return home from our vacation early so our son could attend," said Melanie Sauer of Potsdam. "This is such a high quality and amazing program that we did not want to miss it."

"We knew immediately we would sign our daughter up for the camp," said Robin Rhodes-Crowell of Canton. "Research shows girls generally score lower in math and science as they get older. Naomi loves inventing, science, creating, and exploring and we want to keep it that way. Programs such as Camp Invention are a great way for her to keep her excitement while learning and growing all at the same time."

Five attendees with financial need were awarded scholarships that allowed them to attend the program. Two students received scholarships from Open Windows for Girls, a program of the St. Lawrence County American Association of University Women, while the others were sponsored by community members.

In keeping with the "green" theme of the Camp Invention program, the Potsdam Wal-Mart donated 80 reusable water bottles to help keep



CAMP INVENTION - SUNY Canton's first day at Camp Invention. Roody the Roo visits with campers during

Camp Invention participants hydrated during the week.

Ronald J. Tavernier, Jr. and David Barnes, both faculty

members at SUNY Canton, and Mary E. Graham, a faculty member from Clarkson

University, are the site organizers.

For more information about Camp Invention, visit www.campinvention.com.