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Royle Students Explore Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math After School

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During early dismissal days recently, Royle Elementary School students had a chance to explore a wide-range of science, art, robotics, and engineering activities after school.

Known as STEAM Week, which stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM), more than 300 students had an opportunity to explore, tinker, and have a little fun.

Through a robotics class, students were able to build their own dancing monkey and spinning top robots, and then code them to move using a program on Chromebooks.

They also learned the properties of sound, including how sound can travel and be altered. In a Science activity, older kids experienced first hand Newton's three Laws of Motion.

The library and art staff also hosted a special program called "March Maker Madness" to introduce students to a wide-range of Makerspace activities.

"I had as much fun as my students creating a color wheel spinner to prove that Sir Isaac Newton's theory of color actually works," said art teacher Jill Morton.

"Students colored the three primary colors on a card board wheel and when it spun, all three secondary colors were created. Sir Isaac Newton was the first to discover the spectrum of light and joined it in a circle to create the first color wheel."

Library Media Specialist Sherrie Lanier said students applied creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking to produce amazing work. Using Scratch & Makey Makey, tools developed by MIT's Media Lab, students in Grades 3 to 5 created interactive posters, stuffed animals, bulletin boards, and floor boards.

She noted that student projects highlighted various curricular areas — social studies, science, world language, and music.

Makerspace exemplars were created for display by Royle students Daniel Kletter, Grade 5, Andy Boudo, Grade 5, Snahashish Datta, Grade 5, Ellie Zuro, Grade 5, Emma Van Loan, Grade 5, Connor Strahley, Grade 3, Grant Galvin, Grade 3, Lilly Schilling, Grade 4 and Anna Qin, Grade 4. K-2 students engaged in fun engineering challenges using Keva Planks. Students constructed buildings, towers, bridges, and contraptions using these precision blocks.

STEAM Week was coordinated by PTO Enrichment Committee Chair Beth Jacobs and parent volunteers Stefanie Desai, KC Simon, Cristina Boudo, Rachel Hennemuth, Mia Mihopoulos, Tara Wurm, Kavita Polaki, Denise Runco, Kelly Thomas, and Ann Gallagher.

"It was so amazing to see almost 300 young participants fully engaged in STEAM! Nothing makes me happier than watching my children learn while having fun," said Jacobs.

"Smiles and laughter were everywhere while trials, failures, and successes were achieved with the experiments. The Royle PTO is thrilled it was such a huge success!"

— *Marc Marin is district director of instructional technology. This article is republished from the Darien Public Schools News of the Week newsletter.*