

SCIENCE IN THE SUMMER

Vacation doesn't stop kids' learning at local libraries

By Chris Barber
cbarber@21st-centurymedia.com

WEST GROVE » School may be out, learning doesn't stop during the hot weather, especially for the kids who register for Glaxosmithkline's "Science in the Summer" at their local library.

The program, which employs certified science teachers to teach the week-long programs, invites elementary school kids to dedicate a week of their vacation to learning about various topics in chemistry, physics and technology.

"The children are exposed to good science and their is no pressure," East Goshen retired science teacher Bill Turner said.

Turner has been doing this for 15 years and said he really enjoys the relaxed atmosphere and fun associated with it.

Having competed the two level course (first-through-third and fourth-through-sixth grades) at Oxford's public library, he came to the Avon Grove Library on Monday, July 24, for the beginning of the four-day course.

This year's topic is "Science in sports."

Turner said the material is very basic and easy to participate in, and it doesn't ask the kids to use material that is beyond their level of learning.

On Tuesday the 20-or-so kids at Avon Grove Library were studying nutritional drinks and meals.

Turner divided the group in thirds, assigning each group ei-



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Teacher Bill Turner scatters food container posters on the floor for the students to pick out what they would like best for their meals.

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ther breakfast, lunch or dinner. Then he scattered symbolic containers of different foods all over the floor and asked each person to pick out a food from their meal that they like.

Then the science began. Returning to their groups they were asked to record category by category the nutrients in the foods they chose. At the conclusion,

they were able to see which meal was the most nutritious based on fats, sugars, carbohydrates, proteins, etc.

On the following day, Turner said, they would be creating a nutritious drink and later studying and experimenting on how the brain works.

GSK Science in the Summer is a free science education program that helps elementary school children "grow into science." Through classes held in public libraries and other

community-based organizations, the program gets kids excited about learning science with hands-on experiments. For more than 30 years, according to its mission statement.

The program traditionally engages the participants in hands-on activities like gauging energy by creating primitive see-saws or testing the flotation of various objects by placing them in water. The kids also are made very much aware of scientific exploration safety practices and methods.

Turner said every summer has a different theme, and the organizers work hard to come up with new ideas in chemistry, physics and technology to keep the program fresh.

The local libraries administer the programs, and they require advance registration, although the courses are free. Traditionally, the classes fill up fast when the dates are announced in late spring.

Glaxosmithkline (GSK) works with the Franklin Institute to sponsor the program every year. After the courses are over, GSK presents Family Day at the Franklin Institute for the participants and their families to cap off the summer adventure.

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