[Note: This article was scheduled to run in April 2020. It will not be circulating in 2020 because STC cancelled their Summer Camps for the year due to COVID-19. However, it is complete and can be held for a future date.]

**South Texas College**

News Center

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**STC sparks young imaginations, boosts summer learning**

It’s never too early to start learning at South Texas College. Children as young as 2 years old can attend one of the many summer camps that STC offers annually.

The weeklong camps at several of STC’s locations are open to youngsters ages 2 to 17, and take place in June and July. This year the programs will offer more options than ever, with a total of 55 sessions in 26 areas ranging from science, technology, and engineering to leisure activities, including Piano Camp and Guitar Camp.

“We’re trying to really build it up with all the departments here at the college,” said Lorenna Trevino, continuing education operations manager at STC.

“We’ve done this a good number of years, but it’s always been just a couple [topics],” she said of the summer camps. “Nothing like this year. Last year we did CyberPatriot (cyber security), Aviation, and Drones. This is the first year we’ve had a lot of interest from within our departments to offer summer camps for children.”

The youngest participants, ages 2 to 12, can sign up for Adventure Camps, where they will learn about a new topic each week. These include protecting the environment, beach and pool safety, tent camping, playing sports, making robots using boxes, and more.

Older children, ages 13 to 17, can choose from subjects like App Development, Aviation Camp, Comics, CyberPatriot, Digital Art Camp, Drone Piloting Principles, FANUC Robotics, Intro to Ceramics, Game Development, Lego Ev3 Programming, Printmaking Camp, Reading Enrichment, Sewing Camp, Tool & Die Making, United Chemistry, and WaterBotics. The curriculum is diverse, engaging, and often worthwhile for future careers.

The summer camps give many young people in the Rio Grande Valley the chance to gain new skills in industries that interest them. They can also focus on improving fundamental skills in courses like Reading Enrichment. One thing every camp session has in common is that they have the ability to make learning fun and accessible.

“The theme [of Reading Enrichment] is ‘Dr. Doolittle’ this year, an adventure.” Trevino said. This makes it exciting, and helps students with reading comprehension skills at the same time, she said.

The ArchiAdventure Summer Camp — where students learn about architecture and civil engineering using 3D printers, laser cutters, and basic visualization skills — will be in its third year, said Laura Salas, program chair and associate professor in the Department of Architectural & Engineering Design Technology.

“We’re hoping to expose the fields of architecture and civil engineering to younger students so they build an interest in it,” she said. “Show them the technologies that are used in an architectural firm or civil engineering firm — the industrial software AutoCAD. They’re also introduced to model making and the tools they’ll use involving 3D printer laser cutting, and also virtual reality.”

It’s not just rewarding for the young students, but for the instructors as well. Most of the year, the faculty works with young adults and adults. Then comes June, where the faculty members get to stretch their teaching techniques with younger students.

“It’s actually fun,” Salas said of working with a younger age demographic. “I’m used to teaching college students, adults, and then when you’re teaching younger students, the attention span is significantly reduced, so there’s quite a bit of adjustment.”

Trevino said the summer camps are kept affordable, and that STC puts parents at ease in a new environment.

“We try to minimize the cost so the parents can bring their children in and be part of the college during the summer,” she said. “We work with the parents, too, so they’re confident that their kids are in a safe, secure place.”

For many participants, it is also their first look at a college campus, and participating in the camps becomes a point of pride.

“And I’ve seen this before, at summer camps, they’re the first ones in their family to come to a college, and they show off their certificate [to sibilings]: ‘I’ve got this, and you haven’t been to college yet,’” she said with a laugh.