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## P-TECH Summer Program offers diverse experiences

By ASHLEIGH LIVINGSTON Press-Republican 1 hr ago

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PLATTSBURGH — At ADK P-TECH, learning opportunities don't cease simply because the traditional academic year comes to an end.

Instead, the school's Summer Bridge Program brings a fresh selection of educational adventures aimed at expanding students' knowledge of science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM).

"Another core component is really team building," said P-TECH Coordinator Michele Armani.

"It gives new students an opportunity to meet already enrolled students and for students to have a fun way to work together."

### SPECIAL EVENT

This past summer's course catalog was developed based on student requests and included — among other things — art classes, field trips, job shadowing experiences and outdoor-recreation.

"We had some students, who, through a competitive process, were selected to go to a STEAM conference," Armani said.

A week-long event in Rome, N.Y., Project Fibonacci brought students from all over the world together to take part in team-building activities and hear from speakers, including actor Alan Alda, University of California at Berkeley astronomy professor Alex Filippenko and astronauts Chris Hadfield and Alan Bean.

"We met so many amazing speakers," said P-TECH student and conference participant Sally Blow.

She also worked with other attendees to create a project, which her group presented at a STEAM fair that was open to the Rome community.

"I was in the art group, and we focused on the importance of art in children's lives," Blow said.

"And we had an interactive display with paint set up and clay, markers and crayons, and we had posters with photography, and we had one of our friends singing, and we had karate demonstrations.

"It was just really pretty cool."

## **HANDLING COSTS**

Attending the conference cost \$1,500, Armani noted, "which is a very fair price for everything our students get, but it's still a lot of money."

She is hoping to offset some of that cost for students in the future by obtaining grant funding.

All other Summer Bridge activities, however, are free for students, who are encouraged to participate in at least one offering.

## **LEARNING THROUGH FUN**

"I did the painting program during the summer, and I think it was a really good experience because I've never done it before and wanted to," said P-TECH pupil Megan Imhoff.

She and fellow participants created paintings with the help of step-by-step instructions from area artist Jess Furnia.

"It was really fun," Imhoff said.

Meanwhile, P-TECH student Dan Jiguere took part in the Summer Bridge Program's hiking group.

Though the plan was to complete all of the peaks comprising the Saranac Six, he noted, "we still have two left to do."

Even so, the outings were an opportunity for Jiguere, an experienced hiker, to assist his less experienced peers.

Others explored the art of photography this past summer, choosing spots in the area where they wished to capture images.

Those photos, along with clay works and paintings, will be part of an exhibit called "Through Our Eyes," which will be on display at Clinton Community College on Oct. 12, when P-TECH hosts a town hall meeting with State Assembly, congressional and Plattsburgh mayoral candidates.

"We wanted to share with our elected officials and our community members what matters to students," Armani said of the inspiration for the exhibit.

## **NEW EXPERIENCES**

Also as part of the P-TECH summer experience, some students, like Jonathan-Cliff Jomnang Mboujanj, participated in SUNY Plattsburgh's Upward Bound Program.

The opportunity provided a glimpse at college life, as he spent two months living in the dorms, attending classes and giving back to the community.

And for P-TECH student Caitlynn Perry, a summer internship with a heating-and-plumbing business resulted in potential future employment.

"I got to go and circuit all of the furnaces that we put in, and it was a lot of hands-on work, but it was good because I got to learn a lot about the electrical circuits," she said. "I really enjoyed it."

In fact, because of the experience, Perry now intends to use her time at P-TECH to further develop her skills in that field.

“They told me that if I come back with the electrical engineering degree out of this program, they'll give me a job as soon as they can," she said.

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