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Mars "Curiosity" Robotics Academy Summer Camp Schedule 2013

2013 Week of:	Morning Session (8:30AM-11:30 AM)	Afternoon Session (12:30 PM-3:30 PM)
June 3-7	Kindergarten & 1 st Grade	2 nd Grade & 3 rd Grade
June 10-14	4 th Grade thru 8 th Grade	Kindergarten & 1 st Grade
June 17-21	Kindergarten & 1 st Grade	4 th Grade thru 8 th Grade
June 24-28	4 th Grade thru 8 th Grade	2 nd Grade & 3 rd Grade
July 1-2	Teachers and Coaches Workshop	
July 8-12	2 nd Grade & 3 rd Grade	4 th Grade thru 8 th Grade
July 15-19	Green City Challenge (8:30 AM thru 3:30 PM)	
July 22-27	Green City Challenge (8:30 AM thru 3:30 PM)	

By KEELEY MOREE • Leader & Times While students throughout the area still have a half semester of school left, preparations are already under way at the Mid-America Air Museum for another summer at the “Mars Curiosity” Robotics Lab.

“Last summer we started with just two weeks,” MAAM director Jim Bert explained. “The idea behind this was I wouldn’t initiate the program until this summer, but I thought, why wait? Let’s go. And it’s been wonderfully successful. So far we’ve had over 255 children in grades K-8 and we’ve launched four robotics teams involving more than 30 children.”

Within 10 months of operation, the museum’s program has also become the Kansas Affiliate Partner for the FIRST (For Inspiration and Respect of Science and Technology) LEGO League.

“It’s a unique program and we’re bringing it out to this area first,” Bert added. “Children thrive on this robotics system. They learn math and don’t even know it. The fact that we have it and have a dedicated lab for it, we find that we are uniquely positioned to do this out here because for the most part schools and other entities don’t have this space.”

With the goal of boosting student performance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields of study, Bert explained that the upcoming months will involve a tenacious effort to outpace and expand offerings in the area.

This summer, robotics camp offerings will expand from 2 weeks last year to 7 weeks in 2013. Curriculum which was once only offered to K-8 students will now reach the high school level and efforts are underway to create and support a high school FIRST TECH Challenge (FTC) team. Bert also hopes to grow the FIRST LEGO League (FLL) from 4 teams currently to 8 teams in the future while at the same time creating 10 Junior FIRST LEGO League teams for students K-3.

Bert added that the quality of instruction will be increased while cost for families is lowered. “This year we will have only Kansas certified teachers who understand curriculum and standards

and can bring quality education to our children,” he said. “We also lowered our cost this year. The national average for a robotics summer camp is \$250 to \$350 dollars. We’re offering it for \$30, and that’s because we have the generous support of our foundation.”

Also new this summer will be a more advanced “Green City Challenge” program for experienced robotics students. The program involves a theme-based set which guides students through LEGO MINDSTORMS building and programming method containing three training mats, a challenge mat and more than 1,300 elements for building challenge models. The “Green City Challenge” camp costs \$60 per student and is limited to 32 students who have completed one of the 4-8 grade “Mars Curiosity” Robotics Lab courses in the past.

The four-day camp sessions run June 3 to July 27, and parents are encouraged to sign their child up early as class sizes are limited.

“It’s very exciting for the children. We don’t have trouble getting them to come, we have trouble getting them to leave,” Bert said with a smile. “We’re already starting to get people signed up. Last summer we had to turn people away and we don’t want to do that, so we’ve expanded the number. People have a tendency to wait, but we need people to start contacting us if they don’t want to be turned away.”

Parents can call the Mid-America Air Museum at (620) 624-5263 to reserve a space for the camp. Reservations can also be emailed to harriett.gick@cityofliberal.org with the child’s name, age or grade level, as well as the camp session(s) they wish to attend.

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