

Press Release for the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia Newsletter

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Petersburg, VA is hosting the *Sci-Tastic* (Science is Fantastic!) Camp, a fun-filled and educational adventure for rising 4th and 5th graders July 5 – 20, 2017. This is the third year for the free science camp which is a partnership between Virginia State University (VSU) and Petersburg Parks and Leisure Services (PPLS). During the three-week camp, the church parish hall is transformed into vibrant classroom laboratories for forty junior scientists! Each day, campers see “science come alive” through exciting hands-on investigations in physics, engineering, chemistry, and biology. The campers investigate the role of worms in the health of the planet, and design challenging airplane, sailing ships and roller coasters models. Fun and educational field trips are planned, including a trip the Science Museum of Virginia. Interested parties should contact PPLS (804-324-4014 or 804-324-4015) to complete a registration form. The registration period is June 1 – June 26, 2017. Acceptance for the free camp is on a “first come first serve” basis for the first 40 students.

The camp is funded by a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant and is a joint venture between the College of Education and the College of Natural and Health Sciences at VSU. The three-year grant is directed by the research team of Drs. Trina Spencer, Tracy Walker and Leslie Whiteman. The co-camp director is Mrs. Wanda Velez. The goal of this grant is to increase the interest, skills and confidence of preservice teachers to teach science in an inquiry-based, hands-on manner. Current VSU students and recent graduates serve as the camp teachers. VSU students receive instruction in effective strategies to teach science in their college courses during the academic year. The *Sci-Tastic* camp represents a capstone opportunity for these future teachers to apply these instructional strategies in a real-world scenario. Teacher salaries, science supplies and other camp expenses are funded by the VSU NSF grant. The partnership with PPLS manages the camp registration, and provides the free daily breakfast and lunch.

Reverend Father Willis R. Foster, Sr. and the congregation of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is delighted to host these junior scientists at the 2017 *Sci-Tastic* Camp!



Rev. Willis R. Foster, Sr. welcomes the *Sci-Tastic* campers to St. Stephens.



Students growing plants in worm composting containers.



Students examining worms under the microscope.



Airplane engineering design competition!!!