

## Press Release for the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia Newsletter



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

St. Stephen's Church in Petersburg, VA recently hosted the 2015 *Sci-Tastic* (Science is Fantastic!) Camp, a fun-filled and educational adventure for rising 4th and 5th graders. During the three-week program which was held July 6 – 23, 2015, our parish hall was transformed into vibrant classroom laboratories for twenty-two junior scientists! Each week, campers saw “science come alive” through exciting hands-on investigations in physics, engineering, chemistry, and biology. Our campers investigated the role of worms in the health of our planet, designed challenging roller coasters models, and took field trips to the Science Museum

of Virginia and the Willcox Watershed Conservancy. The walls of our church vibrated daily from the shouts of these very enthusiastic junior scientists!



Campers study worm behavior.



Campers investigate how worms help plants to grow.



Campers investigate the laws of energy, force and motion.



Campers apply physics and engineering concepts to design their roller coasters.



*Sci-tastic* Camp Teachers

The *Sci-tastic* Camp is the result of a partnership of St. Stephen's Church with Virginia State University (VSU) and Petersburg Parks and Leisure Services (PPLS). Current VSU students and recent graduates served as the camp teachers. The camp, funded via a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant, is a joint venture between the College of Natural and Health Sciences and the College of Education at VSU. 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. 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 were funded by the VSU NSF grant. The partnership with PPLS provided the campers' transportation to field trips sites, daily meals via FeedMore and site coordinators to manage daily parental check-in/check-out procedures.

St. Stephen's congregation was delighted to host these junior scientists and is looking forward to *Sci-Tastic* Camp 2016!

*More information about the Sci-Tastic Camp may be found at <http://www.ststephenspbgva.org/>*