

Students roll different colored clay together to make unique beads that were dried and made into necklaces.



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Math, technology camp attracts a diverse crowd

By Patricia Rengifo

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A group of youth from around the state and surrounding states spent this week at St. Cloud State University learning and exploring.

The Math-Science-Computer Camp at the college has grown from humble beginnings. In its 17 years, it has taught children everything from physics to culture. When the camp debuted in 1987, there were 27 children registered; this year, 150 have attended the three weeklong sessions.

Technology has helped the camp expand. Topics this year include digital cameras and a 3M PowerPoint presentation.

The camp is geared toward minorities and girls in grades three through eight. It's aim is to expose the children to math and technology in hopes they will excel in these fields.

"We've had students go on to college here at St. Cloud State as well as other colleges," said Robert Johnson, camp director.

The camp is sponsored by 3M, Federated Insurance Co., Xcel Energy Foundation and the SCSU Ethnic Studies Department.

The campers spend part of the day in university classrooms and the rest of the day learning science hands-on at a camp outside Rockville.

"The content has changed, especially in computers," Johnson said. "As technology evolves, we change what we teach."

They also learn about wildlife, water quality, insects, plants and environmental issues, Johnson said.

After a long day on the farm, the kids enjoy the nights camping out in the dorms. Many call it their favorite aspect of the camp.

"It's not like other camps because you live in the dorms," said Rashena Warren, 13, of Bloomington.

Aichon Yang, 14, of Forest Lake, agrees staying on campus is a perk. "At first I didn't want

to come, but then I got here and it was fun," she said.

The girls enjoy other parts of the camp as well. Yang liked the astronomy class the most, and Warren liked learning about sparks in physics class.

They are taking home more than knowledge.

"Making new friends is the best part," Warren said. Yang and Warren are now close friends and plan to exchange e-mails and stay in touch.