

New Center of Innovation offers fun, STEM exposure to JBA kids



BY BOBBY JONES STAFF PHOTOJOURNALIST / JULY 1, 2016

Olivia Seidel, 8, and her friend, Cameron Baldwin 9, experienced loosely piloting a Zorb ball around the Joint base Andrews Youth Center gymnasium – and had a lot of fun – during the grand opening of its Center of innovation June 24 on Joint Base Andrews.

The youngsters were among a sea of happy and curious faces discovering new technologies at the center dedicated to science, technology, engineering and math, (STEM), jointly sponsored by the Boys and Girls Club of America, Raytheon and Joint Base Andrews Youth Center.

Funded by a \$5 million grant from Raytheon, a technology and innovation leader specializing in defense, civil government and cyber security, the center is the first of 22 state-of-the art centers to open world-wide that will benefit from the multi-year support.

“Our entire goal is to provide science, technology, engineering and math immersion for the children of service men and women and to help them with simple things like tutoring them with their STEM

homework, provide them with exposure to things like a 3D printer and software programming and tying math and science to practical day-to-day things and design activities, Raytheon CEO and former Air Force captain, Thomas Kennedy, said. “We want to expose them to a skill set that they can use for life.”

Col. Bradley Hoagland, 11th Wing and Joint Base Andrews commander, thanked the Boys and Girls Club of America and Raytheon for their support and illuminated a vested interest by Kennedy.

“How cool is it to go in there and see all of the demonstrations?” Hoagland asked to an audience full of anxious kids cheering as they waited to enter the new center – alluding to the scientific experiments, the Bed of Nails and Elephant toothpaste, conducted in the center’s auditorium.

Dr. Erika Ebbel Angle, founder and director of Science for Scientists, a Boston non-profit organization that sends scientists into schools to inspire kids in STEM areas, was among a group of scientists responsible for the eight different activities at the center’s grand opening, including the ultimate robotics experience in which club members will learn to build and program their own robot, 3-D printer, high definition motorized drop screens, HD multimedia interface projectors, rocket and solar panel kits, microscopes, a flight simulator, a planetarium and a science theater show to peak children’s interest in science.

“We’ve partnered with Raytheon for a number of years bringing really neat interactive science experiments to kids,” Ebbel Angle noted.

Jim Clark, president and CEO of BGCA, explained that the center – and all future similar centers on military bases – are about “job readiness and career development for the next generation of leaders.”

According to Vince Yure, 11th force Support Squadron Youth Programs director, Andrews is the only U.S. military installation to received the first phase of the grant totaling \$61,000 for the center.

“I feel that this is one of the greatest accomplishment achieved since I’ve been here,” Yure said. “We have a great partnership with The Boys and Girls Club of America, and now with Raytheon on board with giving us grants and opportunities for kids to develop and start their future, I would say this center is one of the more significant contributions for the children.”

Yure noted more than 140 children, ages 12-19, will have access to the lab, which can accommodate 25 students at a time at least three times a week initially, and one Saturday a month as a program start off.

“It’ll actually be open every day for the kids that come to the center regularly for after school care and summer camp,” Yure said.

For more information on the Center of Innovation’s schedule, call (301) 981-5636.

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From left to right: Jim Clark, Boys and Girls Club of America president and CEO, Tom Kennedy, Raytheon chairman and CEO, Desha Jenkins, Andrews Revolution Keystone Club president and teen volunteer, Col. Bradley Hoagland, 11th Wing and Joint Base commander and Vince Yure, 11th Support Squadron Youth Programs director, participate in a ribbon cutting ceremony to open the first Center of Innovation at a U.S. military base facility June 24.

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Screenshot of the actual news article at

http://www.dcmilitary.com/andrews_gazette/news/new-center-of-innovation-offers-fun-stem-exposure-to-jba/article_d342d367-9097-515a-8cf3-1332472736ab.html