Boy Scouts launch new STEM program

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By WNCT STAFF - email

GREENVILLE, N.C. -

A new partnership between the Boy Scouts and the United Way kicked off Thursday.

The team committed over $150,000 to launch a new science, technology, engineering and math program.

The program will serve 320 first to fifth grade at risk youth in Pitt, Beaufort, Pamlico, Craven and Wilson counties. With more funding, the group expects to expand the program to serve over 500.

"We're the Boy Scouts of America. Over 100 years we've stood true to this. Our mission is youth, values, hope and responsibility," said Gwangi Shipp.

A recent study conducted by the Scouts suggests that programs like these can make a difference. They say just a small boost can help "at risk youth" to have all the advantages they need.

Weekly meetings will be held in community centers and churches where at risk youth live. They will be working on Nova STEM Awards that seek to make learning fun while introducing them to science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Students will learn what makes a Frisbee work, launch rockets using water and compressed air and other outdoor activities. The outdoor laboratory for many of these learning experiences will be the PotashCorp ECO Lodge located in Camp Boddie near Chocowinity.

Students will also focus on activities that will teach values necessary to make ethical lifelong decisions. Weekly meetings will also feature individuals in science careers that will serve as role models.

Six STEM partners were recognized by Dr. Paul Cunningham, Dean of the East Carolina Medical School and a member of the East Carolina Council, BSA Multicultural program committee. Other Board members of the new partnership are Andrew Cartee, Washington, NC; Arcelio Newell, Wilson, NC; David Monroe, Farmville, NC; Delphia Talley, Wilson, NC; Sheriff James L. Knight, Edgecombe County; Jimbo Perry, Kinston, NC; Dr. Lacy Hobgood, Greenville, NC; Lamont Wiggins, Rocky Mount, NC; Dr. John Pender, Greenville, NC; Norman Belmore, Jacksonville, NC; David Stanley, Jacksonville, NC; Terry Best, Rocky Mount, NC; Vanessa Ervin, Jacksonville, NC; Dr. Reza Ershada, Greenville Dr. Jeffry Alejandro, Greenville, NC and Pastor Rodney Coles, Greenville, NC.