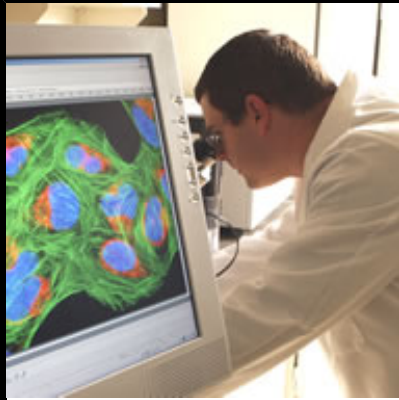


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## Science Camp Revamped for Third Successful Year



By Eddy Ball

September 2008 

The Durham Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta marked several firsts when its members welcomed students to the third annual Science and Everyday Experiences (SEE) Summer Camp on June 28 at the chapter house in Durham. This year, there were more children and volunteers involved, new activities and an innovative program for parents. In addition, there was a special visitor from Bethesda on hand to help out and observe the program in action — as well as ponder the ways that SEE could work as a model for science enrichment programs elsewhere.

SEE [set records](#) this year by engaging 38 Durham Public Schools (DPS) students from grades four through eight through the efforts of some 50 volunteers from the sorority and the Triangle community, including scientists from NIEHS, local schools and universities. Sponsors included [Durham Alumnae](#), NIEHS, Durham Parks and Recreation, Burroughs Wellcome Fund, the Delta Research and Education Foundation, and local businesses.

For the 2008 camp, SEE organizers introduced new hands-on, fun-filled science, mathematics and critical thinking programs for the children. The program, which ran from 8:15 a. m. to 2:30 p.m., began with breakfast followed by a health and fitness warm-up led by NIEHS Technical Information Specialist Shawn Jeter.

Students in grades four through six participated in forensic science activities to solve the CSI-themed “Case of the Missing Play Station,” a curriculum developed by Joan Pakenham, Ph.D., co-chair of Durham SEE and director the NIEHS Office of Research Compliance. Participants took prints, analyzed fabric and performed ink chromatography as they worked to untangle the who-done-it challenge. They also used their own fingerprints to make comprehensive identification cards they could take home for their parents.

For students in grades seven and eight, there were engineering activities developed by Delta member Lauren Davis, Ph.D., professor of Engineering at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, using a computerized application called SimCity to model, build and manage four different cities from infrastructure to operations. The campers had to develop a budget for their cities, calculate the need for



SEE Campers and organizers posed for a group photo at the start of the third annual SEE Summer Camp. (Photo courtesy of Veronica Godfrey)



Beard welcomed volunteers and students to the third annual SEE Summer Camp, the culmination of months of planning. (Photo courtesy of Veronica Godfrey)



such resources as water and plan for the many different situations that real cities must be prepared to face.

A group of Delta members that included NIEHS Director of Biomedical Education Marian Johnson-Thompson, Ph.D., compiled the [Parent Educator Manual](#), which served as a companion to the half-day Parent Involvement Workshop. The workshop provided information and hands-on activities for parents and caregivers to effectively engage their children in science and mathematics.

A panel of area educators joined Johnson-Thompson and NIEHS Industrial Hygienist Sharon Beard, chair of Durham SEE, in a series of presentations about the range of educational opportunities for DPS students. Speakers included North Carolina Central University's Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School Dean of Students Natasha Godwin, DPS Board of Education member Omega Parker and UNC-CH Math and Science Education Network Assistant Director Diane Affleck.

Kay Johnson Graham, Ph.D., Minority Outreach Coordinator in the NIH Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management, attended the camp in a quasi-official capacity. Graham said later that she'd traveled to Durham specifically to see "the great things that are happening farther down the pipeline of the next generation of scientists and biomedical researchers." While post-secondary opportunities are critical for nurturing future scientists, Graham also recognizes the benefits of programs like SEE, and she considers it an example of effective community-based partnering and "an outstanding model that could be used on the national level."

SEE is part of a year-round sisterhood of science education service in Durham by the women of the Durham Delta Alumnae Chapter. It is the result of a national five-year SEE Initiative, an informal science education project funded by the National Science Foundation and developed by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and the Delta Research and Education Foundation, in partnership with the AAAS Directorate for Education and Human Resources Programs. The Durham Delta Alumnae Chapter is one of only seven chapters that have been recognized on the national level for exemplary SEE program development.

After breakfast, the campers engaged in a cardio workout led by Jeter that was obviously as much fun as work. (Photo courtesy of Veronica Godfrey)



Davis, above, was careful to ensure that all the computers were online for the SimCity activities. (Photo courtesy of Veronica Godfrey)



Packenhams took advantage of the quality help with forensic activities provided by NIEHS scientists Undi Hoffler, Ph.D., above right, Diane Klotz, Ph.D., and Elena Braithwaite, Ph.D. (Photo courtesy of Veronica Godfrey)



Most of the parents shown above in their morning workshop joined their children for activities after lunch. (Photo courtesy of Veronica Godfrey)

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