

SUU museums partner for unique education experiences



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For three years the Garth and Jerri Frehner Museum of Natural History and the Braithwaite Fine Arts Gallery on the campus of Southern Utah University have been partnering to offer science and art in a unique way to K-12 students in Cedar City.

"Scientists are far more creative than most people assume," said Jackie Grant, museum curator and professor at SUU. "When we pair science with art it is more engaging to general audiences such as elementary school children."

The Fall Education Program has reached over 2,000 elementary and high school students since it's beginning.

This year's program began Monday and ended Friday.

The topic this year was green infrastructure, specifically green roofs.

SUU is home to one of the few green roofs in Southern Utah, which helps insulate the building and slow down storm water runoff, according to a news release.

SUU undergraduate education and science majors help the younger students visualize how green roofs work through play and art as one of the exercises, organizers said.

Children were asked to imagine that if they were a raging thunderstorm, what could a human do to slow them down?

In a game in which some children are green roof plants, and some are wild storms, the storm-kids touched by a plant have to slow down and release their water and energy more slowly than storm-kids on a traditional roof, organizers said.

"The game was so enthusiastically received that I've received requests from SUU professors to ask the storm-kids to be a little quieter – especially when undergraduates are taking exams," Grant said.

SUU undergraduates then headed over the art gallery to teach the children about the art of assemblage, which is art made by grouping found or related objects.

Learning about the art of assemblage and viewing the ABC: Assemblage, Book Art, Collage exhibit facilitates a lesson about how modern scientists and artists work together, Grant said.

The college students taught the children about the science behind green infrastructure and then put them into teams to create assemblages of green infrastructure science.

The two institutions partner every fall to pair science with art and teach students about both fields throughout the weeklong event.

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