



At Work

Inspiring the Next Generation of Scientists

The Prince George's County 4-H Youth Development program is inspiring a new generation of scientists through the Adventure in Science (AiS) program at the University of Maryland, College Park, right next to Washington, D.C. AiS is a hands-on educational program designed for middle school aged youth. The program is rooted in the principle that learning science is fun and exciting. AiS strives to demonstrate the practicality of science and its role in everyday life, while introducing youth to science career possibilities. Following program completion, youth work with their peers to create presentations, sharing what they have learned, and present these at the program showcase. They are scored on content knowledge, background research and presentation skills.

The program includes workshops on topics such as: kitchen chemistry, biotechnology, entomology, marine ecosystems, animal, plant and soil science, heliophysics, climate change and aerospace.

Workshops are made possible through collaboration with the University of Maryland (UMD) and the University of Maryland Extension (UME) faculty, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) researchers. Youth engage in interactive lessons, performing experiments and drawing conclusions. We meet every Saturday for seven (7) weeks in the spring and again in the fall, with the seventh week reserved for the program showcase. The program is also supported by undergraduates at the University who serve as mentors to program participants. Mentors assist with the weekly program responsibilities and coach youth through their final project presentation. This condensed model of the AiS program is adapted from the model established by Montgomery County, MD to focus the program based on local resources.

As a result of participating in the AiS program, youth have reported wanting to learn more about science. There was also an increased interest in pursuing a career related to science. Our goal is to continue to grow the program's capacity within Prince George's County. Inspiring the next



generation of scientists is critical to our urban communities. We need more youth pursuing careers in science to solve the upcoming problems our world is facing. Programs like Adventure in Science work to capture youth interest in science at a young age and encourages their interest in experimenting and making discoveries. This program meets the need for local hands-on science programs that are not offered in the schools; we believe that by encouraging local youth to participate in campus offerings at a young age, they will be more likely to develop a greater interest in higher education in the future.

For more information about this project, please contact:



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION
Solutions in your community

Laura Manzi

Extension Educator
4-H Youth Development
University of Maryland Extension
Prince George's County
6707 Groveton Drive
Clinton, Maryland 20735

301-868-9636

<http://extension.umd.edu/prince-georges-county/4-h-youth-development-0>

lauram@umd.edu