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Archbold helps kids jump into science

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Courtesy photo/Dustin Angell Campers from Delray Plants families explore their first seasonal pond.

VENUS — Archbold Biological Station teamed up with Delray Plants this summer to offer the children of plant nursery employees an opportunity to attend a session of the 2015 Ecology Summer Camp program.

Dustin Angell, education coordinator, restructured the normal week-long camp program to accommodate the youngsters.

“We wanted to remove any obstacles that could keep the children from getting here or thriving in our program,” he said. “We changed camp hours, altered age restrictions, obtained sponsorship for the camp from generous donors, and provided breakfast, lunch, and snacks.”

Delray Plants CEO Randy Gilde praised the efforts of Archbold staff to make the camp sessions possible.

“When Archbold called and said they had an opportunity, there was no question that we were interested,” he said. “It was going to be difficult for a regular, traditional 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. camp. Right away, they created a 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. camp so that the employees could drop the kids off on the way to work and pick them up on their way home.”

Angell said Delray Plants was very supportive. Staff there translated registration materials into Spanish and provided some of staff to help during the camp day.”

The campers portrayed a sense of wonder and the joy of discovery, sparking an interest in keeping science journals and learning the names of plants and animals. “Archbold’s research interns were nothing short of science rock stars,” Angell said. “Their activities engaged the campers with role play, physical activity, and hands-on involvement. And their personal tales of wildlife and world travel opened campers’ minds to the possibilities of science careers.”

Kids and their parents were treated to a pizza party where parents watched a photo slideshow of the camp activities. Each child received a camp T-shirt. The boys and girls were excited to share their experiences and some tried to convince mom or dad to hold one of the education department’s snakes or a “friendly” bug.

“I felt honored that the parents trusted us with their children. It was important to us that the parents felt welcome as well,” Angell added.

Hilary Swain, executive director of Archbold, commended Gilde and Delray Plants management for partnering with them to educate the local community about science and nature. “In speaking with the parents, who drive by the Station every day, many had never visited us or knew what we did,” she said. “We want to be good neighbors and provide an opportunity for these children that they might not have had otherwise.”

Delray Plants supported funding for Archbold and Into Nature Films to produce a short video highlighting the camp. Titled Jumping into Science, it is available on Vimeo at vimeo.com/138124934 or on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GQwJL9m47M.

Archbold Biological Station is eight miles south of Lake Placid at 123 Main Drive, Venus. The entrance gate is 1.8 miles south of State Road 70 on Old State Road 8 (CR17) on the west side of the road.

Archbold Biological Station is an independent, not-for-profit research facility with the mission to build and share the scientific knowledge needed to understand and protect the life, lands, and waters of the heart of Florida and beyond.

Visit at www.archbold-station.org or on Facebook.

For more information call 863-465-2571 during business hours.

Photos:

Courtesy photo/Dustin Angell

Campers from Delray Plants families explore their first seasonal pond.