

# Kids at College Program Takes Virtual Learning to New Level

Baytown, TX — With community gatherings canceled, sports leagues sidelined and play dates nowhere in sight; many parents were left wondering how to keep their children engaged and entertained during the long summer months of the pandemic. The solution for several local families was the Lee College Center for Workforce and Community Development Kids at College summer program.

This summer, Lee College teamed up with Black Rocket, a national leader in tech education, to offer students virtual summer STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Camps.

Families were able to choose from a wide variety of cutting-edge courses with topics like coding, game design, eSports, virtual reality and more. Each week top teachers led students in live group classes, and then students convened into smaller breakout sessions with customized learning coaches.

As a bonus, Lee College offered \$100 scholarships for up to three classes per student thanks to a generous gift from a local donor earlier this year.

Estefana White from Anahuac said the classes were a huge help for her family this summer, and thanks to the Lee College scholarship, her 10-year-old son Ethan was able to take three classes instead of one.

“We were so grateful for these classes, and the scholarship made it even better,” said White. “It was a big relief for us as parents to have something that we knew our son would enjoy learning about, but would also keep him engaged over the summer. These were the first STEM-related classes he has attended, and they really boosted his motivation to learn more.”

Thirteen-year-old Ciera from Baytown also completed three classes in Python programming, coding and JavaScript. Because Ciera aspires to be a software engineer when she grows up, she was excited to learn how to design video games and explore different programming languages first-hand.

Ciera’s mother, Billie Baker, believes the Kids at College program has started preparing her daughter for a successful STEM career.

“The earlier kids are exposed to these types of programs, the more comfortable they will become,” said Baker. “If kids can have direction and learn about technology at a young age, I believe they will have a better chance to succeed.”

From fine arts to creative writing to sports, Baker said she has always been impressed with Lee College’s wide variety of summer courses offered for kids. She said this summer was no exception with Lee College providing access to high-caliber classes that are typically more expensive on other learning sites.

“Not only are these classes an affordable and effective way for our kids to explore technology, but it helps them feel connected with a local college and gets them thinking about actually going to college one day.

“The pandemic has taught us that we need to learn the technology; you never know what’s going to happen. The Kids at College program establishes an easy pathway that can lead kids to career and academic success,” said Baker.

There is still one week remaining in the Summer 2020 Kids at College program, and the Lee College Center for Community and Workforce Development is planning a full list of virtual learning opportunities for Fall 2020 as well.

“The Kids at College Program provides an important outlet for children to learn while doing activities they love,” said Katherine Norland, Kids at College program manager. “We love hearing about the fantastic experiences our students had during our online summer courses and anticipate more amazing stories with the fall online learning opportunities.”