Engaging Creative Minds (ECM) is one of four winners of the 2016 New York Life Excellence in Summer Learning Award from the National Summer Learning Association. Summer STEAM Institute is a six week arts-integration camp for 100 students in third through eighth grades. This summer there are two simultaneously running camps. One is in Charleston at the College of Charleston and one is at St. Paul Elementary in Summerton, South Carolina. The mission of ECM is to inspire the potential of all students to achieve academically and become imaginative, adaptable, and productive adults in an increasingly competitive South Carolina workforce.

**Summer STEAM Institute**

Summer STEAM Institute’s primary goals are to prevent summer learning loss by closing the opportunity gap; to provide professional development for future teachers; to build relationships; and build capacity within districts. ECM’s vision is that all summer programs across the state of South Carolina and beyond embrace arts integration as an effective teaching strategy for keeping kids engaged and having so much fun they don’t know they are learning.

*STEAM Institute description*

In the STEAM camp, campers rotate through “stations” that are related to each weekly theme which are directly aligned with South Carolina’s curriculum standards for the content area and the art form. In the Charleston *Roll ‘Em Camp*, youth learn about movie production, stage & set design, editing, costume design, script writing, musical scores and more during a fun-filled week in Hollywood. Some other themes included:

**Visual Arts** – campers worked on fashion design for their characters.

**Music** – campers wrote the musical score to go with the performance which was based on the book *Rikki Tikki Tavi* by Rudyard Kipling.

**Theatre** – campers wrote the script during this class and then perfected their acting skills and knowledge of theatre.
Dance – campers worked on core movements that directly related to the adjectives and verbs in a story.

Athletics – campers traveled back in time to play “vintage” recess games such as four square, freeze tag, jump rope, hopscotch, Mother May I.

Field Trips – at the end of July, the Clarendon campers and teachers visit the Charleston camp, spend two nights in dorms at the College of Charleston and attend various cultural centers and museums. This year they will be attending a baseball game to cheer on the Charleston RiverDogs.

PARTNERSHIPS

ECM believes that local communities should support the learning and that is why both camps look the same from the outside, but the programming on the inside is quite different. In Charleston, ECM partners with Chucktown Squash Scholars to provide athletics in the Silcox Center at the College of Charleston and various organizations such as the RiverDogs baseball team and The Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art provide enrichment activities to support weekly themes.

In Clarendon, ECM partners with the superintendent’s office to identify community organizations that could work within the camp. ECM has had the privilege to work with sweet grass basket artists and local quilting groups, among others. Boeing South Carolina works with campers during Engineering week at both camp locations.

Professional Development/Team Members
In Charleston, ECM works with recently graduated college students to provide more than six weeks of intensive arts integration training using a framework provided by the Kennedy Center. Our hope is to provide these teachers with strategies for creating effective teaching and learning cultures in their future classrooms. In Clarendon County, ECM works with the teachers at St. Paul Elementary to provide them with support that grows each year so they become self-sustaining in year three. Finally, artists and teachers engage in collaborative planning the week before camp begins.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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