Alexandria Library - Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library

STEAMtivity Programs

With money from a $7,500 Curiosity Creates grant from Disney and ALSC, Alexandria Library's Beatley Central Library worked with local partners to present 21 special high-tech and low-tech open-ended programs for children ages 6 and up collectively called STEAMtivity, a merge of STEAM and creativity.

We purchased new materials like laptops, iPad Minis, MaKey MaKeys, Arduinos, littleBits snap ciruits, Lego Mindstorms robots, and Strawbees. Staff learned the basics of our new technologies, though we didn't become experts. To encourage children to explore in ways that interested them, we taught children enough to get started with each new technology or presented a goal or challenge, and then encouraged them to explore as they chose.

Staff were available if children needed help and worked with them to think through problems or look up answers. This programming style was very popular with our kids and they had more fun and were more proud of their accomplishments than they were during regular step-by-step programs. In addition, children intuitively tailored programs to their own levels. For instance, in our Lego Mindstorms program we had children from ages 6 to 14, all working on different tasks from advanced coding to simply building with legos, and all having a great time! As children were encouraged to work in groups, they also learned how to work with others, compromise, share, communicate their ideas, and make new friends.

We are excited to continue these programs through the summer!

*Submitted by Diana Price, Youth Services Manager*

Arduinos

littleBits

MaKey MaKeys

Marble Run Challenge

MaKey MaKeys
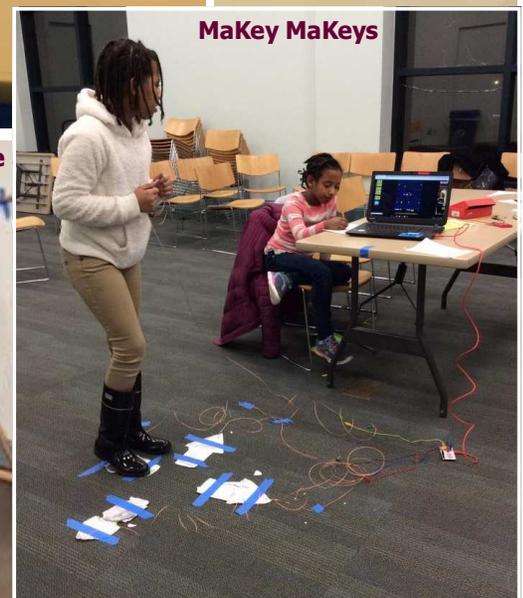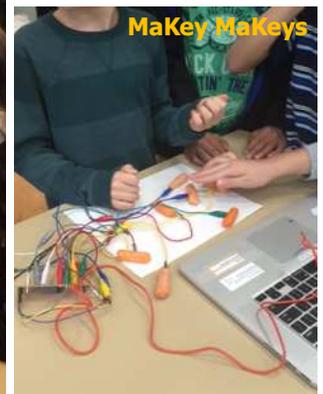
More pictures on the next page.

STEAMtivity Programs - *Continued from page 4*

Puff Mobile Challenge
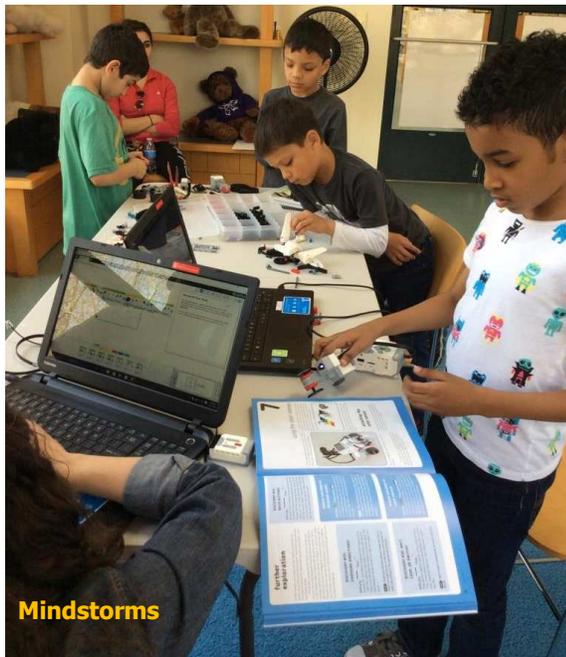
Mindstorms

Strawbees

Stop Motion Movies

Mindstorms