

# Future engineers

## STEM students receive certificates for engineer, math and science summer work

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ST. CROIX — All good things come to an end and Thursday morning marked the end of the two-week Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Program ran in conjunction with the University of the Virgin Islands' Research and Technology Park and the St. Croix Foundation.

A closing program was held at UV's St. Croix campus, in which 20 junior and high school students presented their projects to their family and received certificates for their hard work.

These students were selected to participate in the intensive classes, taught by UV professors Velma Tyson and Michelle Peterson, that showed them how to use programs RoboLab, Bricks Command Center and NetLogo to build robotic rovers and entertaining simulations.

Upcoming freshman at the St. Croix Educational Complex Zaharah Henderson, 13, and her partner 19-year-old freshman at the Seventh Day Adventist School Shaquille Bailey, worked in NetLogo to produce computer code for a simulator they called, "The Waving Man."

Henderson, a first time STEM student, said finding the right code to get the man to wave his hand was the most difficult part.

She explained that in NetLogo code, a "turtle" performs an action, an "observer" creates more turtles and "patches" create the background. Henderson and Bailey had two trees, a blue sky and green grass as their background and were able to successfully create a waving man.

"I joined STEM to increase my



Associated Press  
Adrian Gillem and Devon Pelle demonstrate their robot's retrieval capabilities during their presentation at the STEM Summer Enrichment Institute closing program on Thursday at UV's St. Croix campus.

abilities in science. I love science. I can do math but I am not good at it. I think I will either become a lawyer or a Chemical Engineer," said Duvante Vegas, 10th grader at the St. Joseph High School.

Vegas and his partner were chosen to present the game "VChopper" on Thursday.

"VChopper" is a video game created in NetLogo by all 20 students in which motorcycles have to make their way through obstacles before they run out of gas. The class created the game to play an explosion sound and show flames anytime the motorcycle crashed. They also created a bonus feature, a gas tank, that would refuel the motorcycle during the game.

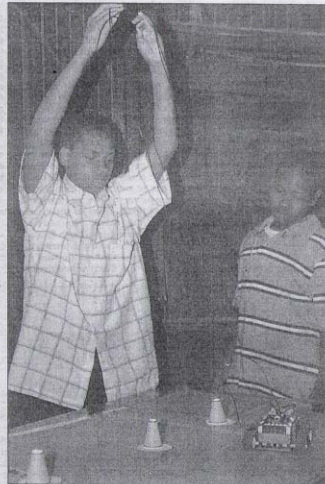
"These students experienced the frustrations of a real engineer first hand," said Tyson, instructor of the robotics class. It turned out that most students preferred

working with robotics.

Upcoming senior at Complex Kadeem Blanchard explained that students first built their rovers with legos, and using infrared radiations, transferred basic computer programming language into the rovers to make them perform task. On Thursday, the students demonstrated rovers moving around obstacles, moving in 90-degree angles, picking up objects and playing music.

Students Adrian Gillem and Devon Pelle built their rover, "Tiger", to pick up objects using a claw. Pelle says writing programming code is a frustrating task because a simple mistake can throw the entire objective off. He says he enjoyed both classes, but NetLogo allowed him to "spread his wings" and be more creative.

The STEM program began in 2000 with a grant from the National Aeronautics and Space



Kathleen Dunah  
Glennel Vanterpool and Ajahne Daniel direct their robot through an obstacle course during their presentation at the STEM Summer Enrichment Institute closing program.

Administration, donations from the St. Croix Foundation, and foundation can be contacted at recently, a partnership with UV, 773-9898.