

Cordova Park's First School-wide STEAM Project Getting to See Forces In Action

Pensacola, FL: If you walk in a classroom and see signs with words and definitions for velocity, acceleration, friction, gravity, force, push, pull, and centripetal force, what type of classroom would you think you are in? Physics? Science, right? Not this week. Instead, you will see these signs in the Art room at Cordova Park Elementary School where every student in every grade is getting to learn about these concepts while creating art.



"We will create pendulums using bamboo tripods and containers made from recycled plastic drink bottles with adjustable caps from glue bottles, to allow the students to see physics in action, rather than just hear about it," explained Cordova Park's Art Teacher, Karleen Roll.

Roll recruited some assistants, including her parents, to help keep this fun project contained to planned workspaces – both inside and out. Her father is a retired Science teacher, so teaming up was a natural fit.



"You take a bottle half-full of paint hanging from a string or a cable and open it up so the paint will come out a little bit to make a stream as it moves around. As the container changes position it makes a line and makes all kinds of interesting patterns," said (Coach) Bill Hemming "We have three outside that are ten feet tall and five smaller ones inside and it's working. It's working well."



Cordova Park's STEAM projects are aimed at having the whole school working on the same project, so it can be built upon and referenced by teachers in every subject area. Cordova Park Special Area teachers (Art, Music, PE) are all working on physics this week and are focused on forces. So across the parking lot from the taller pendulums, other students attending their Physical Education classes will also learn about force as they use blender bikes to make smoothies. And then on Music days, students will learn more about pendulums.

"Vocabulary can be introduced in Language Arts and concepts can be explained in Science, but getting to actually work on one of these pendulum paintings helps make abstract concepts real. Even the youngest kids can explain what they have learned and why their paintings look the way they do," Roll added.

Future STEAM projects will be planned later this year and again in the Spring semester that will also involve all Special Area classes.

The "oohs" and "ahhhs" coming from her students confirmed for Roll just how powerful this lesson has been. "That's my favorite sound," she whispered after a round of exclamations came from the whole class.

Photos have been attached to show a pendulum painting (2 shots to show progression) and one from the P.E. class and student creating a smoothie on a blender bike. Additional photos and a video clip can be found on Facebook on the Escambia School Public Relations page.

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