

Summer STEM from Your Library

A STEM Origin Story

In 2017, Summer STEM from Your Library began as a pilot program funded by the Idaho STEM Action Center and coordinated by the Idaho Commission for Libraries. That year, 32 public and school libraries were granted \$500 to provide STEM learning activities during the summer months. Each library also received new STEM books and a Summer STEM branded yard sign to promote the program. STEM books were also distributed at 8 Libraries in the Park sites in the Treasure Valley. In total, 6,537 children and teens attended Summer STEM from Your Library programs; 4,442 children and teens attended Libraries in the Park programs and received STEM book; and 3,000 STEM books were distributed during outreach events.



Bubbles at Ada Community Library - Star

Summer STEM from Your Library has grown to reach over 65 public and school libraries each year. Participating libraries receive a \$500 micro-grant to provide STEM programming during the summer, as well as yard signs, books, and a few STEM supplies to get started, like stomp rockets and Mentos explosion kits. ICfL also contracted with a librarian to write a toolkit filled with different experiments and promotional ideas to help libraries provide quality STEM experiences. Libraries play a crucial role in out-of-school learning during the summer months. Idaho libraries provide hundreds of STEM programs each summer to keep families learning and engaged with STEM all year long.

The summer of 2020 was particularly challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While many libraries were closed to physical visits, they continued to offer programming virtually and through take-home kits. That year's Summer STEM libraries actually surpassed 2019 attendance numbers because they were able to reach so many families through curb-side STEM kits and virtual STEM programs. Some libraries created detailed videos on how to do STEM projects at home with recycled materials. Others focused on helping families learn safely at home with take home kits. At the Ada Community Library's Star Branch, a librarian distributed STEM kits for nine weeks at a summer lunch distribution site. On the last week, one of the children who had received several STEM kits presented the librarian with a kit that he had made for her, complete with materials and instructions on how to do the STEM activity that he had created.



Science Lessons in Hamer

This year's Summer STEM program allowed libraries all over Idaho to provide both in-person and at-home STEM experiences. Connie Sobczyk from the Genesee Community Library said, "I truly appreciate the STEM funds and ideas provided by the ICfL grant. It was tremendous help in providing me the STEM programming potential during summer reading and beyond. Take-aways are a method of providing flexible, fun opportunities during the constraints of COVID environment as well as during less trying times." It is important to note that most of the Summer STEM grant recipients partner with other STEM providers in their communities to deliver high-quality STEM programming. Idaho's STEM Ecosystem helps make this program successful.



Butterflies at Benewah Tri-Community



Homemade Snow in Midvale



Hover craft - Coeur d'Alene