



GATE students look to the sky during Kaleidoscope Days

By Lauren Buangan
Desert Trail intern

Published: Wednesday, June 30, 2010 6:08 PM CDT

TWENTYNINE PALMS — Through Friday, July 2, Twentynine Palms GATE students are looking to the sky to shed some light on subjects they would not normally learn in school.

Between the third and eighth grades, students have had the opportunity to attend a two-summer program, Kaleidoscope Days, at Copper Mountain College .

The first-year program, which kicked off Monday, June 21, is spearheaded by Dr. Deborah Turner, curricular program specialist for the Morongo Basin Unified School District.

"We wanted to offer GATE students from the district the opportunity to get together and have exposure to arts and sciences over and above what they would have in a classroom," Turner said.

The students have been studying astronomy, oceanography and art in weekday classes comprised of no more than 25 students. They are taught by local and county teachers and sponsored by local and county groups.

"It's definitely not as stressful as regular school," said Delaney Proudfoot, 12. "We don't have homework and we get to see all our friends."

In astronomy, a class sponsored by local Twentynine Palms group Sky's the Limit, the students have the option of going to nighttime viewings of the sky via telescopes to get a hands-on perspective of what they study in the classroom.

"We wanted to give them the opportunity to see things differently," Turner said. "Hence the name Kaleidoscope Days."

The entire program is funded by the Department of Defense Education Activity grant, which gave the Morongo Unified School District \$2 million over three years to fund programs such as Response to Intervention, AP online classes at the high schools, AP teacher training, Teacher Professional Development and Kaleidoscope Days. Quarterly meetings are held to evaluate the usage of the grant.

"It's just to see that we have been doing what we said we were going to do," Turner said.

"The focus of the grant was to help the higher achieving students. That is why Kaleidoscope Days are solely for GATE students."

Emi Anderson, 10, was enthusiastic about the art classes.

"We've painted, drawn animals and faces," she said. "It's helped me with my artistic abilities and the class has been teaching me things I may never learn in regular school."

Turner said she is thankful to Copper Mountain College for offering its campus for the two weeks of classes.

"The students like going to college," she laughed. "CMC has been very gracious to us."

Justin Dingeman, 13, had nothing but good to say about the program.

"It's only three and a half hours, but it's worth it," he said.