

Looking for a Learning Moment

Thursday, August 8, 2013

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Meet Abby Hatfield, physical science teacher and science department chair at Newmarket High School, and Matt Endrizzi, science teacher at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. Matt and Abby are summer science teachers in the KEEPERS program

offered by UNH's Joan and James Leitzel Center for Mathematics, Science, and Engineering Education.

KEEPERS (Kids Eager for Engineering Program with Elementary Research-based Science) is a weeklong half-day summer camp experience for students entering grades 2-5. The Leitzel Center offers 3 weeks of KEEPERS sessions, held in a UNH Mechanical Engineering laboratory.

Taught by Matt and Abby, with guest faculty from UNH's College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, KEEPERS introduces early-schoolers to hands-on engineering challenges and to various fields of engineering. UNH Civil, Chemical, Electrical, Environmental, and Mechanical engineers present topics such as cleaning groundwater, bridge building, simple machines, and voice-activated electronics. As a teacher and former researcher, Matt sees KEEPERS as a wonderful STEM experience: "The kids learn through experimentation as they ask questions, measure, calculate, design, and build."

KEEPERS also offers professional development for K-8 teachers. It introduces teachers and pre-service teachers to science and mathematics educational concepts and activities that can be implemented in their own classrooms. Teachers work with campers and staff in morning sessions, and then process the experience in afternoons, after camp.

What motivates them as teachers? "Observing a learning moment," says Abby. "It's what we look for." And both have seen many learning moments. Matt has been teaching KEEPERS for 8 years, and Abby for 7 years. Abby began working with the Leitzel Center as a UNH undergraduate interested in teaching Earth Science.

Though they both teach high-school level science during the school year, they have an enthusiasm for science that young students cannot resist. These elementary students are truly eager



MATT ENDRIZZI

to test their hand at science challenges, working collaboratively to accomplish great things from basic concepts.

For more information on KEEPERS and Leitzel Center programs, visit <http://www.leitzelcenter.unh.edu>.

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