



YCC group with John Ahrens of WSOC-TV.

STEM Activities Captivating YCC Students

Flying drones, building paper rockets, and playing tic tac toe with a robot are a few of the activities that Youth Career Connect (YCC) students at Anson High School experienced at The GeekFest on November 13. The GeekFest is an annual event sponsored by Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) Levine Campus in Matthews. This educational event highlighted the creative innovations in technology, media, and industry. Various companies and CPCC departments were on exhibit with their new inventions.

YCC students were greeted by CPCC staff with a STEM presentation which included programs offered at the Levine campus. Students visited exhibitors and discussed their inventions and how they operated. During reflection of the event, one student commented that technology had not been a true career interest until attending this event. Another student who aspires to be a pilot was excited about the opportunity to operate a flight simulator with the guidance of a veteran Air Force pilot. Students participated in other activities including making a paper rocket and launching it using compressed air, building a catapult with craft sticks and a plastic spoon, and learning about kinetic energy by remaining still with a bowling ball swinging toward them. Students operated a "pet ball" using an iPad, watched and learned how a 3D printer works and examined products made from it. They interacted with other high school students who built YETI a robot that could catch and throw a ball. Students gained a better understanding of STEM and the skills needed to be successful in these type of careers.

YCC students currently taking Earth Science had the pleasure of listening to WSOC-TV Meteorologist John Ahrens on November 18. Mr. Ahrens visited Anson High and talked about his experiences being a storm chaser and his passion for weather. Mr. Ahrens captivated the students with weather stories, his background, and careers in the news media. Mr. Ahrens shared some behind the scenes aspects of news broadcasts along with knowledge and skills needed if they wanted to enter the field of broadcast journalism and/or meteorology. YCC students enjoyed his visit and look for him to return next semester.

Paul Riley, Admissions Representative from Lincoln College of Technology in Nashville, TN, spoke to students interested in Auto-Diesel careers on December 3. Interested YCC students signed up to attend the presentation. Mr. Riley shared that Lincoln College does not produce mechanics, they educate technicians who will become technology-literate to be successful in the auto industry. Students who have graduated from their school have succeeded in companies such as BMW and Freightliner.

YCC students were amazed at inventions and products that are produced by Cisco Systems. Cristal Watson, Project Manager and Akilah Smallwood, Systems Engineer, with Cisco Systems, talked with students on Friday, December 5. They discussed the history of technology and advancements within the industry including IP infused arenas in which even small items were network controlled. They explained how restrooms notified personnel through email when supplies were low. They shared the courses, skills, and interest students must have to become successful in STEM and Informational Technology careers. They also showed how business and industry are using Cisco products and software to enhance consumers experience while shopping using smartphones. Mrs. Watson and Mrs. Smallwood stressed the opportunity available for females, especially minority females, in a male dominated industry. These ladies provided students with STEM information to take with them including key courses, websites for STEM resources, and advice for the importance of having a mentor from which to learn.

Finally, Grady Hardeman, Coordinator/Athletic Trainer for Sports Medicine at Carolinas Healthcare System in Charlotte, spoke to interested students on December 9. Students learned about the nature of the job as an athletic trainer and other careers that require employees to be a Certified Athletic Trainer. Mr. Hardeman allowed students to explore the mobile unit that is dedicated to providing care during events such as tournaments, marathons, etc. Mr. Hardeman shared his experiences as the Head Athletic Trainer at Western Carolina University and the internship he experienced with the Carolina Panthers. His advice to students was to volunteer to work in the area they are interested in. They could begin by shadowing the school athletic trainer Shay Huntley, Certified Athletic Trainer for Anson High School.

Career exploration through experiential activities and conversing with professionals in the field adds a richness to academics in the classroom. YCC students are given multiple opportunities to explore a various array of STEM careers in unique atmospheres. Sparking interest to a student to further explore a particular career is the basics of career exploration. The STEM spark has been lit for YCC students.

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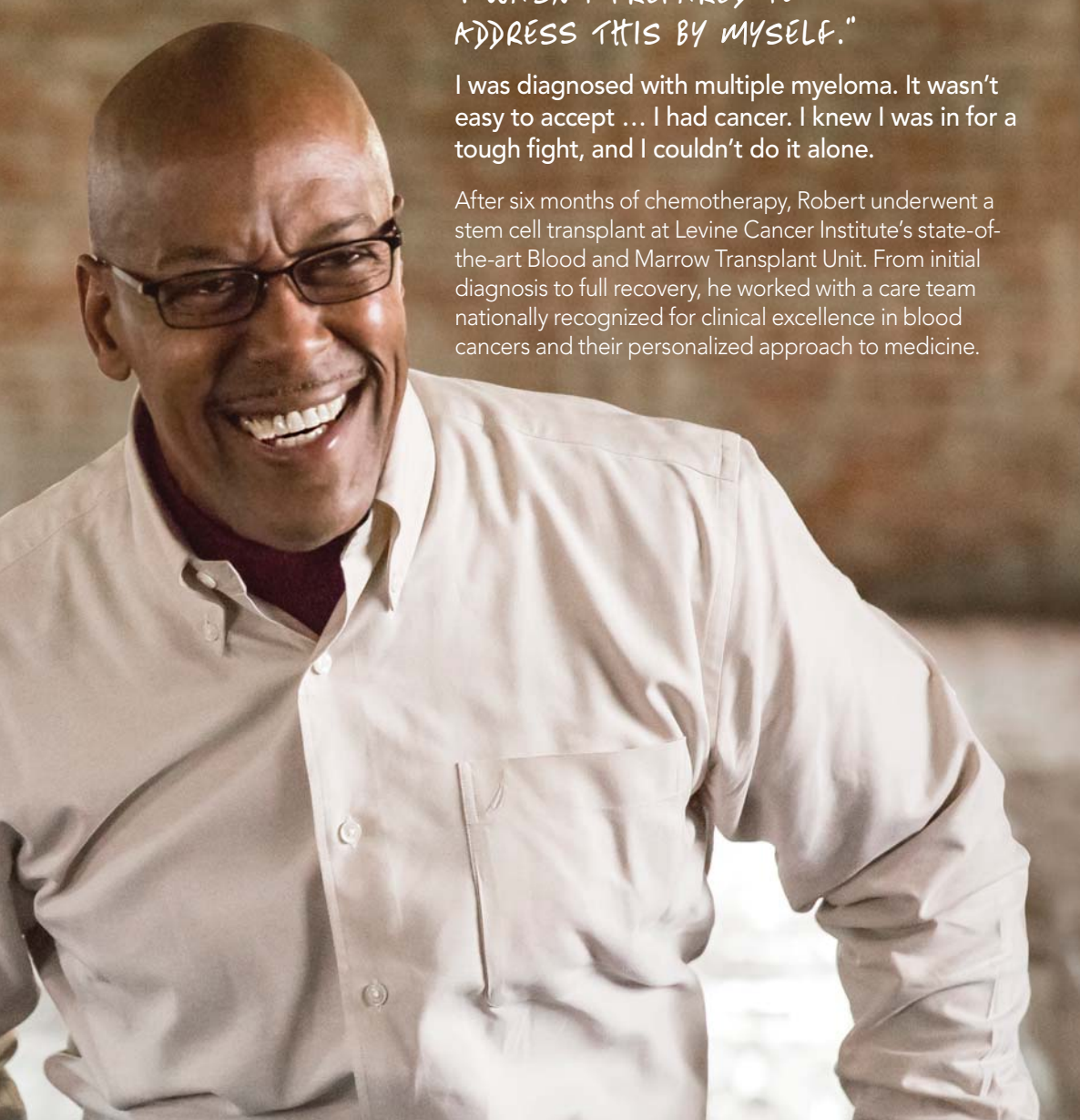


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