Animal Science

Meet Ben and Ted our 4-H CAPITAL Guinea Pigs! This month our guinea pigs made a special appearance at Rodriguez Elementary. The garden science students collected greens and carrot tops from their garden to feed the guinea pigs. The students enjoyed learning facts about guinea pigs and asked their science instructors if more animals can come visit their class in the future!
Engineering & Tinkering

4-H CAPITAL was excited to celebrate National Engineers Week in February. We did tons of hands-on engineering projects in our classes and brought an activity to the University of Texas’ Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day. In Laquita and JaLeesa’s classes at Linder Elementary, students have been working on solving engineering and math puzzles to participate in an “Escape Room” style game. They’re unlocking combination locks, cracking codes, and being inquisitive scientists every week. Over in Evan’s class at Baty Elementary, students are exploring the intersection of nature and engineering. They created hoop gliders and made improvements based on animal flight to make the gliders fly further. To make your own hoop glider at home, you just need a straw, some strips of paper, and tape: check it out here: https://sciencebob.com/the-incredible-hoop-glider/ We had a blast at Girl Day in the amazing Engineering Education and Research Center. Blair and Dani coordinated our activity, putting together a Do-it-Yourself Arcade where used MakeyMakey circuit toys to control vintage arcade games like Pac-Man, Tetris, and Frogger. We saw over 200 inspiring future engineers, programmers, and creative problem solvers.

GARDEN SCIENCE

Spring is around the corner, but already we are seeing new buds, increased animal activity, and more produce in our gardens. Warmer temperatures mean that soon our tomatoes, peppers, and squashes can go into the gardens as well. Meanwhile our after-school clubs have been busy broadening their STEM experiences and skills! Classes at Wooten, Pecan Springs, and Hillcrest elementary schools brought attention to the environment by creating their own seed paper, engineering green roof models and making terrariums, making biodegradable plastic, and bringing new life to old T-shirts by turning them into reusable “harvest” bags. Seve’s Hillcrest tech class dissected a cow eye as they learned about the sense of vision. At Collins Elementary, Jerid’s students have been exploring habitats and wildlife – they even engineered cool spider webs while learning to use hammers and nails. Students at Smith Elementary have been exploring medical careers and chemistry. For Valentine’s Day, kids at Perez and Rodriguez elementary schools lit things up with circuitry, made crazy slime, and flew paper heart airplanes. Of course, we’ve been cooking, too – this month our gardening classes have been enjoying healthy recipes such as pineapple fried rice, kale chips, seasoned popcorn, and hummus. Widen and Perez have also explored other aspects of wellness through mindfulness, yoga, and meditation activities. A lot has been happening to say the least!
Meet our AmeriCorps member, Chanel!

Hello! My name is Chanel Davis and I am a first-year AmeriCorps member serving with 4-H CAPITAL as the Animal Science Team Lead! I am originally from Los Angeles, CA but I spent a few years in Buffalo, NY at Canisius College studying Animal Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation, Environmental Studies, and General Education.

Our program focuses on teaching hands-on science lessons in four curriculum areas: Animal Science, Garden Science, Natural Resources, and Engineering and Tinkering. By centering lessons around students' interests we try to help them connect with science in their everyday lives. By exercising their creativity, problem-solving, and inquiry skills, our program empowers youth voice and choice in every way we can.

Want to make Kale Chips like our Garden Science classes? Follow these instructions!

Servings: 2-4 as a snack

INGREDIENTS:

1 pound curly kale, leaves removed from tough stems and torn into large pieces
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1/4 teaspoon salt
Lemon
3 tablespoons freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Line two baking sheets with aluminum foil.
In a large bowl, using your hands, toss the kale leaves with the olive oil until evenly coated. Arrange the kale in a single layer on the prepared baking sheets and bake for 25-30 minutes, until leaves are completely crisp but not browned.
While the leaves are still warm, sprinkle with Parmigiano-Reggiano, salt and a squeeze of lemon (go very easy on the lemon; a little goes a long way). Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary. Transfer to a platter and serve.