



HANDS-ON LEARNING

High school students can head to summer science camps on Hawaii island >> **B2**

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Summer science camps will immerse teens in discovery

The Hawaii island sessions aim to boost students' learning, their founder says

By **Leila Fujimori**
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Studying geology inside a classroom doesn't compare to witnessing lava flows from a volcano.

"The way people learn is by just getting out and touching the rocks and feeling the ocean," said Kaneohe resident Michael Richards, who wants to turn kids on to science just as he was as a geology student at Windward Community College.

His own passion gave him the vision for creating what may be the first science camp in Hawaii for high school students, opening this summer on Hawaii island.

"Everything was about getting out in the field," said Richards, founder and executive director of Science Camps of America. Richards began studying science after selling his software business in 2010.

"If it's done as a camp, it would provide enough time to give kids thorough content and enough time for them to absorb it so it sticks," he said.

So he turned to WCC geology, geophysics and oceanography professor

Floyd McCoy, who agreed to oversee the curriculum and programming development.

"This is a fantastic and unique opportunity for kids since it gets them outside, hands-on with the science," McCoy said.

McCoy, who grew up on Hawaii island, knows well the value of taking students to Kilauea volcano and other sites since he's been using field trips for years. As a youth, he spent summers at a camp in Volcano, "hiking all over the volcano," and learning from real-life examples.

McCoy said he has vivid boyhood memories of his parents driving him out to see "huge Mauna Loa flows roaring down the land-



Floyd McCoy:
The professor helped oversee the camps' curriculum

scape," adding, "We stayed there all night. This memory, plus doing the field courses and field trips, should be extrapolated to a younger generation."

Richards called the Big Is-

land "a science lab unto itself, with active volcanoes, one of the tallest mountains in the world, home to the incredibly sophisticated astronomy facilities and natural energy laboratories ... and a native cultural heritage of discovery and innovation."

Science Camps of America, a Hawaii-based non-profit organization, will offer two 10-day sessions in June and July on Hawaii island.

The first session, Land and Sea, focuses on the volcanoes, beaches, shorelines, deserts and forests of Hawaii (June 22-July 1).

The second, Air and Space, focuses on astronomy, space science, the atmosphere, climate and

climate change (July 1-10).

From base camp at Pahala Plantation Cottages, students will travel in vans across the island.

Students will be able to perform scientific studies such as measuring water levels from Waiiau Lake atop Mauna Kea, and visit places like the Keck Observatory and a turtle sanctuary near Pahala.

Full and partial scholarships are available.

Tuition is \$2,395 per session, and is open to students ages 14 to 17.

For more information, contact Science Camps of America at 678-619-0974, email mike@sciencecamps-america.com or go to sciencecampsamerica.com.