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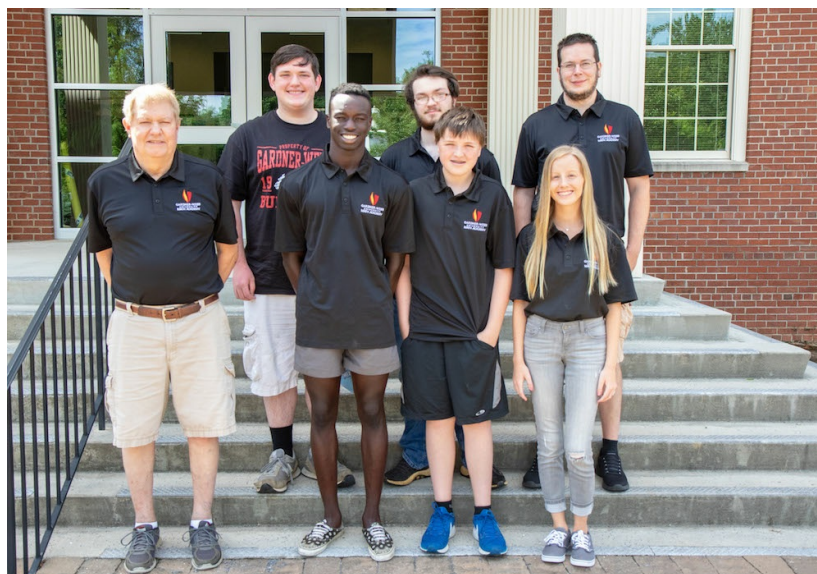
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High Schoolers Learn to Apply Math in Business and Financial Settings



BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—In the seventh annual Math Academy held recently at Gardner-Webb University, high school students studied mathematical functions and learned their applications in business and financial settings. The camp is sponsored each summer by the Stonecutter Foundation in Spindale, N.C.

Dr. Jim Johnson, GWU assistant professor of mathematics, is the co-creator of the Math Academy. “These kids were a joy to work with,” he observed. “They were very interested and very involved.”

Attending were Hunter Gowan, a recent graduate, Camden Sloan, a sophomore, and Eric Oyugi, a senior, from Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy in Rutherford County, N.C., Nick Crosland, a senior from Chase High School in Forest City, N.C.; and Bailey Hall, a junior from Crest High School in Shelby, N.C.

Instructional time was scheduled each morning with afternoon field trips to the BMW plant in Spartanburg, S.C., and the T5 Disney Data Processing Center in Kings Mountain, N.C. While emphasis was placed on learning the concepts, students were also given

opportunities to practice their public-speaking skills. On the first day, they designed surveys and collected responses from patrons at two Boiling Springs restaurants. After analyzing the data, they presented the results to each other.

Crosland was fascinated by the lesson on number theory. “I’ve always wanted to go over number theory,” he shared. “I’m really excited about going to the data center (in Kings Mountain). We are going to do encryption. I plan to major in computer science in college, so this is really eye-opening.”

Thomas Andrews, chair of the math and physics department at Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy in Mooresboro, N.C., taught the session on number theory. He has served as the academy’s co-director from the beginning. He said the activities expose the students to mathematical problems they don’t typically see in the standard high school classroom. He looks forward to working with the students, because they are genuinely interested in expanding their knowledge about math.

Gowan will be coming to Gardner-Webb in the fall. He was excited to learn more about fractals, which are complex, never-ending patterns created by repeating mathematical equations. “I’ve always been interested in math and I really enjoyed seeing all the applications of fractals,” Gowan affirmed. “They are in nature and used in CGI (Computer Generated Imagery).”

Hall enjoyed touring the BMW plant and seeing how the employees were able to bring their different skills together to build a car. She also liked creating the surveys for the restaurants and discovering the findings.

Sloan was excited to learn about number theory and encryption. “I want to go into cyber security and encryption, and so I was really interested,” he assessed.

During the week, the students also heard from Barbara Mull, an investment advisor, and learned to play a computer game about stock market operations. Their last project was to create a business plan and share it with the group. The projects were judged and the winners received prizes.

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