



# Hollywood inspires students at Lincoln Elementary

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Harry Potter, Star Wars and "Frozen" were inspiring kids and parents to learn together Saturday at Lincoln Elementary.

Lincoln hosted its Hollywood STEAM Day, featuring rooms throughout the school dedicated to teaching students, and parents, how science, technology, engineering and math interact with art and Hollywood movies.

One room dedicated to Star Wars showed how "the Force" works by illustrating the power of magnets. Another room, dedicated to the Percy Jackson movie and book series, showed how humans can breathe under water and harness the power of air, like the demigod characters in the movies, by showing off scuba gear and high pressure air hoses.



Alicia Ortega Lopez, 3, watches a ball stay in mid-air thanks to high-pressure air at the Hollywood STEAM Day at Lincoln Elementary in Iowa City Saturday. (Photo: Zach Berg / Press-Citizen)

"We hope children get an appreciation of the art in nature," Lincoln principal Ann Langenfeld said as students walked through the halls of her school wielding toy light sabers, wearing magical capes and guiding their parents from room to room. "There's joy in these kids as they're learning. This makes it all come alive."

Lincoln has held similar events centered around the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and math. This is the first year where it included the art aspect, thus the acronym going from STEM to STEAM. They drew their inspiration for the event from one of the most popular art forms: movies.

Theresa Ho, a parent who has two children at Lincoln, helped organize the day's activities. Ho, who works in the microbiology department at the University of Iowa, was able to help bring many different departments from UI together to teach kids and parents. Community members, the MidAmerican Energy Co. and Sylvan Learning of Coralville also organized teaching activities.

UI's Department of Engineering helped run the Percy Jackson room, and the Department of Physics and Astronomy ran the Stars Wars room. The Department of Biology and Microbiology ran the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles room by showing off mutant bacteria through telescopes.

"The Math Department brought some great ideas and wonderful ways of seeing math," Ho said.

The UI Department of Mathematics ran the "Frozen" room. "Frozen," a massively popular 2013 animated movie featuring a talking snowman and a Snow Queen, may not seemingly go hand-in-hand with math, but the movie's smash hit song "Let It Go" features the lyric "my soul is spinning in frozen fractals all around."

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A fractal, as graduate student Rene Ardila explained, is a mathematical set that is made up of "a self-repeating pattern." In nature, fractals help define the shape of snowflakes since snowflakes are made up of the same repeating pattern.



Rene Ardila, left, a graduate student at the University of Iowa explains fractals to children at Lincoln Elementary Saturday in Iowa City. (Photo: Zach Berg / Press-Citizen)

Graduate students Camila Ramirez and Kathryn McCormick helped kids learn about fractals by having them spell out their name with repeating patterns. "Part of your job as a professor is to communicate what you've learned to the public," McCormick said. "This helps show what we've learn. Plus, they're kids, so it's fun."

Ho, dressed in Harry Potter clothing, walked into each room, from "Frozen" to Star Wars, and saw students and parents learning side-by-side.

"Parents learn something, the kids learn something. Things like this prove education can be fun," Ho said.

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