

Family Maker Space – Juniper 2016

This 2015/16 school year Juniper had the opportunity to launch a Makers Class for Juniper students and their parents. The premises around this idea were to target identified students/families that would benefit from spending some quality time together at school engaged in meaningful and challenging activities. Many of our families face great challenges both in the community and at school. These challenges include language barriers, single-family homes, poverty, and parents working multiple jobs. With generosity from the Rotary Club we were able to purchase items such as Legos, erector sets, and electrical gadgets for student and family use. With these items we were able to start Juniper's own Makers Class. In the beginning it was a challenge to find the right time and families (due to constraints) to get the program off and running but eventually we did just that. For the last month and a half of school Juniper's program was up and running with consistent participation. Students were able to complete challenges such as making objects that move with wheels, Creating objects that fly, and perhaps their favorite was constructing certain items from Legos without directions. These "challenges" allowed students to collaborate, be innovative, and communicate with each other to complete a task (skills needed in today's workforce).

Next year we plan to continue this great program and even expanding it to include more families. Within Juniper's budget next year we have set aside funds to provide a certificated staff member to coordinate the program. The students have really enjoyed and learned a great deal from these classes and the challenges that were presented to the students. We look forward to expanding the program for the 2016-2017 school year.

A special thank you to the Escondido Roatry Club for sponsring and funding this program at Juniper. It is an excellent enrichment opportunity for our students.