



November 15, 2023

The Calhoun County YMCA would like to thank the Matagorda Bay Mitigation Trust for helping make Summer 2023 one of its best so far due to the Environmental STEM Summer Program. The hands on learning experiences these kids get will stay with them for a lifetime and are way more fun than just reading about it in a book because we are bringing it to life. These school aged kids are at a critical time in their lives soaking everything they can up in their heads and with the assistance of MBMT the YMCA is able to help instill its core values along with helping develop kids minds and giving them experiences they otherwise may never have gotten. Our program services kids ages 3- 14 in Calhoun County and per the Y's mission, this program was open to everyone including low-income families through the "Y For All" scholarship program and with the help of MBMT every child gets to have these memorable hands on experiences which they may have never been able to otherwise.

This was our 4th year partnering up with MBMT and was our biggest summer yet. We had a total of 242 kids which is up 57 kids from last year and we plan on growing even more for next year that way every kid that wants to participate is able to do so without a waiting list. We were able to provide 147 Scholarships in June, 130 in July and 47 in August which is amazing even with a shorter summer due to the kids going back to school earlier. We were also able to provide free transportation to all field trips along with free meals and snacks throughout the day to make sure kids were getting the nutrients they need during the day. Many parents have shared their appreciation to the Y staff and enjoy hearing about all the fun there kids have at summer camp while keeping them active during the summer.

Trip highlights include Rockport Bay Educational Center where the kids were able to do hands on projects in the outdoor area down by the Jetties and learned about the different wildlife in the area and there habitations. The kids also went down to Port O'Connor to King Fisher Beach to go fishing with the assistance of Texas Parks and Wildlife to learn more about the natural resources we have available in the gulf along with rules and safety that go along with fishing. At LNRA in Edna provided activities and programs for all ages from kayaking, hands on with plants, education on reptiles presented by professional Michael Price. The Calhoun County Extension office provided fun farm time with the kids being able to see different kinds of animals you would find on a farm and what their purpose is on the farm. The kids also participated in assisting the extension office with grooming different gardens they have and how to properly care for the plants in there different stages. Other trips included Moody Gardens in Galveston where the kids went to educational classrooms and participated in guided tours with educational specialist. Space Center Houston was very exciting for the kids as well because they got to learn about science and space exploration along with seeing a life size spaceship and the different instruments actual astronauts used while in space.

We were also able to provide the kids with The STEM classroom again this summer taught by certified teachers who work directly with the kids in small classroom settings. A few of the different activities/lessons from the summer include Water Shed which is the process of where the water supply starts at and flows to different areas through the process of erosion. They learned about fossils, where they came from and also made some of their own to take home. The kids also did plant seed activities where they went through the process of plants going from a seed to fully grown plants and observed the different stages and how to properly care for them. The process of a water cycle and solar energy were also among different lessons the kids learned about.

Again a big thank you to Matagorda Bay Mitigation Trust for helping make all of this possible and giving kids an opportunity to do and learn things they may not have had the opportunity to do otherwise. We are expecting and preparing for an even larger number of kids and activities for next summer. We are hoping to avoid a wait list and every child that wants to can experience an amazing summer at the Calhoun County YMCA.