

Children learn skills at camp

At this summer camp, children learn how to operate machines, make robots and style hair.

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PALMER – In one room, Sabrina A. Warton styled the hair of a mannequin.

In another, Cheyenne S. Rose and Aaron D. Gillman took apart a robot they had made.

And in another area, five boys showed off the items they made in the machine shop – dice, key chains and mini chopper wheels.

Welcome to Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School's summer youth program, where children ages 9 to 13 learn what the school features through a series of one-week sessions. Last week, cosmetology, robotics and machine tool technologies were offered.

Cosmetology instructor Shelby A. Raymond had her five participants do facials and hair styles on the mannequins and each other. They also learned manicures and nail art.

Kaitlin E. Young, 11, of Palmer, showed off some of the nail art she created – intricate flower designs she made with tiny brushes on fake fingernails.

Warton, 11, of Palmer, said she's been going to the Pathfinder program for three years.

"I like being able to do other people's hair and giving the facials and stuff. It's fun," Warton said.

In robotics, instructor Eric A. Duda's group was disassembling their robots after their "robot championship."

"They all did a really good job. They worked in teams of two. I tell them everyone's a winner," Duda said. "This gives them a chance to create. That's the main thing."

Gillman, 10, of Palmer, and Rose, 10, of Belchertown, both used the word "awesome" in describing robotics.

"You get to build a robot. I took it last year and really liked it because I like to build stuff. I want to learn how to fix electrical stuff," Gillman said.

Rose said she took robotics because she wanted to try something new. And, she said, her brother took the class and really liked it.

In the machine shop, instructor C. Allen Putnam said the students used Computer-Aided Drafting to create items like key chains and dice.

Corey E. Romanski, 13, of Palmer, showed off his key chain where he inscribed the words "Pathfinder Machine Shop" and the date so he'll always remember it. Gunnar S. Bjorkman, 10, of Belchertown, wrote "Boston Red Sox" on his key chain.

Austin L. Gilman, 11, of Monson, wrote "Army" on his, as he wants to join the Army and follow in the footsteps of his great-great grandfather who was in World War II. Hugh W. Edmonds, 10, of Granby, made his key chain for his father.

Gilman said he loved taking machine tool technologies.

"We're thrilled to have these kids here. We want to expose as many kids as possible to the precision machining industry," said Putnam, adding there is a need to fill those jobs.