



For KAMSC students, a summer of learning -- and, literally, climbing to new heights

Julie Mack | jmack1@mlive.com By Julie Mack | jmack1@mlive.com

on September 02, 2013 at 4:05 PM, updated September 02, 2013 at 11:29 PM

KALAMAZOO, MI -- It was a productive summer for a number of students from the **Kalamazoo Area Math & Science Center**, as well as teacher Shannon Houtrouw.

For the second time in three years, KAMSC kids swept the balsa-wood bridge-building contest at Michigan Tech University's National Summer Transportation Institute engineering youth camp.

The prize for Gull Lake juniors Bill Baldwin and Ed Fenwick, and Portage Northern seniors Dhara Patel and Kyle Milka: The opportunity to climb to the top of the Mackinac Bridge.

The quartet followed in the footsteps of four 2013 KAMSC graduates who made that same climb two summers ago: Hannah Abell (Schoolcraft), Nadia Haile (Kalamazoo Central), Amanda Luykx (Portage Northern), and Reinie Thomas (Portage Central).

Other KASMC students who attended camps at Michigan Tech include:

- Women in Engineering — Abby Chapin.
- Engineering Scholars Program — Evan Batsell, Tate Mazer and Zach Mills.
- Women in Computer Science — Kathleen D'Souza, Colby Hanley, Kimberly Kwon, Dhara Patel, Grace Reid, Maria Stull and Katherine Wu.
- National Summer Transportation Institute — Evan Batsell, Ellie Epskamp-Hunt, Subhodh Kotekal, Ben Maddux, Parker Russcher and Amber Salome, plus Patel, Baldwin, Fenwick and Milka.



From the left, Portage Northern seniors Kyle Milka and Dhara Patel and Gull Lake juniors Bill Baldwin and Ed Fenwick at the top of the Mackinac Bridge. -- their prize for winning a balsa-wood bridge-building competition at a summer camp at Michigan Tech University. The Gull Lake students were the first-place team and the Northern students placed second. All four attend the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center.

Photo courtesy of KAMSC

In addition, eight KAMSC students attended University of Michigan's annual computer science camp on the campus of Western Michigan University. The KAMSC were Aaron Claussen, Kitu Komya, Subhodh Kotekal, Chloe Mendez, Kayla Park, Michael Tarn, Matoska Waltz, and Chang Yang.

Three KAMSC students also attended a BEACON camp at Michigan State University, a one-week summer residential program, by invitation only, for 11th and 12 graders. The program is funded by the National Science Foundation.

The website describes it as "preparing a diverse new generation of scientists and engineers with the advanced STEM skills necessary to advance interdisciplinary research on evolution in action, and develop innovative applications with actively evolving biological and technological systems."

The three KAMSC kids were Salome, a Comstock senior, and Gull Lake juniors Carolyn Hammon and Cydney Martell.

In addition, Houtrow, a KAMSC computer science teacher, was one of nine Michigan teachers matched up with nine of Michigan State University's professors in the NSF's Research Experience for Teachers program.

Houtrouw did research in biometrics that explored typing behavior as a non-intrusive, privacy-sensitive means of continuous computer user identification authentication.

KASMC is a magnet high school open to residents of the nine school districts based in Kalamazoo County. It provides math, science and technology classes to high-achieving students, who spend half of their school day at KAMSC and the other half at their home high school. It serves about 300 students in grades 9-12.

© 2013 MLive.com. All rights reserved.