CEG Community Engagement Core Brings Environmental Health and Career Education to the Cincinnati Museum Center

Each summer the Cincinnati Museum Center offers a variety of camps for children, including a Junior Medical Camp. The Junior Medical Camp introduces campers to different facets of the medical profession. The University of Cincinnati (UC) Center for Environmental Genetics (CEG) Community Engagement Core (CEC) visited the camp in July to bring environmental health education and career insights to the participants. Each day between 18 and 20 students in grades 5 through 8 attended the camp.

Early in the week, PhD students Dani McBride and Kaitlin Vollet Martin, from the Epidemiology Program, presented on the environmental epidemiologist profession and their research focus area: neurodevelopment measured by balance testing. Dani and Kaitlin explained how balance can be an indicator of health and then conducted a balance test with the campers. The children’s favorite parts of the session were hypothesizing which systems of the body influence balance and conducting balance tests.

MD/PhD student Courtney Giannini also presented at the camp. Courtney is a mentee of CEG Deputy Director Dr. Susan Pinney and a student in the Epidemiology program. Her session focused on the physician scientist profession and current research on ultraviolet radiation and sunscreen. Courtney discussed SPF levels, the difference between UVA and UVB rays, and common active ingredients and chemicals in sunscreen. The campers conducted an activity that taught them how to read sunscreen labels and a craft that allowed them to observe directly the benefits of sunscreen. The campers’ favorite parts of this session were the presentation, discussing UVA and UVB rays, and finding the active ingredients on the sunscreen labels.

“We were excited to be part of the Cincinnati Museum Center camp,” said Rachael Shepler, CEC Program Coordinator. “We hope these presentations and activities will pique the children’s interest in learning more about their health and different environmental health research areas and professions.”

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The Center for Environmental Genetics is funded by the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS award P30 ES006096) and is housed in the UC College of Medicine, Department of Environmental Health. The Center is led by Shuk-Mei Ho, Ph.D., Jacob G. Schmidlapp Professor & Chair of Environmental Health and Director of the Cincinnati Cancer Center. More information about the Center can be found at http://med.uc.edu/eh/centers/ceg