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Registration Now Open for Van Andel Institute Summer Camps

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (February 2, 2022) — Van Andel Institute for Education’s (VAI) 2022 Summer Camps are now open for registration. While the snow may still be falling in Grand Rapids, VAI’s educators are already preparing a collection of inquiry-based investigations for the upcoming summer season. Designed to foster curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking, students who attend will have the opportunity to think and act like scientists while also exploring a wide range of STEM activities for all grades and ages. Below is a brief description of VAI’s 2022 summer camp line-up. Capacity is limited, so reserve a spot for your student today!

VAI 2022 Summer Camps:

Grades 2–3

- **[Can You Dig it?](#)** Explore the amazing world of fossils. Students will think and act like a true paleontologist as they collaborate with new friends, make their own fossils, create a fossil sandwich, and participate in a unique fossil dig. They will learn how fossils are formed, discovered, and used to help us understand Earths’ past!
- **[Sense-ational Animals](#)**: Explore the amazing world of animal senses. Students meet and handle resident VAI animals and learn about their extraordinary eyes, fantastic feelers, and other sense-ational senses. In addition, they will learn how animals use their senses to survive in their environment and use what they learn to design their own new animals with amazing abilities!

Grades 4–5

- **[Animal Survivor](#)**: Explore the world of animal adaptations and the habitats they live in! Students learn about, meet, and handle a variety of species including invertebrates, amphibians, and reptiles, as well as study animal behavior, observe structural traits, and discover the unique ways animals survive in the wild.
- **[Journey Through a Life in Space](#)**: In partnership with the Girl Scouts, join us for a week of exploration to learn what it’s like to live and work in space. Girl scouts will earn their Space Science Investigator badge as they discover how the human body works differently in space, gain an understanding of the dangers associated with space travel, learn about what robots can do for humans in space, and much more! (*This camp is open to all girls in grades 4–5*).

Grade 4–6

- **What's in Our Water? River Rescue**: Ever wonder, “*what’s in our water?*” Well, now students can find out! Students will investigate this question as they collect, test, and analyze local water samples. They will also examine possible sources of contamination in our waterways, build their environmental expertise, and improve our water quality. Best of all, they will learn from environmental experts to better understand how all our water is connected—and how crucial it is to keep it clean!

Grades 6–8

- **Crime Scene Forensics: Catching a Criminal**: Students will learn what it takes to be a crime scene forensic scientist. They’ll study different techniques used to analyze a crime scene, determine who is ultimately responsible for committing different crimes, and participate in hands-on investigations focusing on fingerprinting, DNA analysis, and more! Students talk with an actual crime scene forensic scientist to learn more about this exciting career, then put their skills to the test and solve a crime on the last day of camp!
- **Power Up: Energizing Our Future**: Students will discover different types of renewable energy. Design a car powered by alternative energy; make a machine that transfers energy to complete a task; use solar energy to cook a marshmallow. Now more than ever, energy needs to be renewable. Through hands-on investigations, they’ll learn how alternative energies can be used to power the future.
- **Hogwarts in Grand Rapids: The Science Behind the Magic**: Calling all witches and wizards! Grab your brooms, or use your Floo powder, and travel to the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry—Van Andel style! Students will immerse themselves in the world of Harry Potter as they get sorted into houses, make a magic wand, and attend courses such as Potions, Care for Magical Creatures, History of Magic, and Broomstick Flying! Then, they’ll use their newfound knowledge to compete in the all new Triwizard Tournament at the end of the camp.

Grades 6–9

- **Mission to Mars**: Students will explore the science, engineering, and technology needed to complete a mission to Mars. Learn about the red planet and why scientists are so interested in learning more about it. They will build and test a rocket that will travel into space! Use LEGO® Mindstorms robots to construct and test a rover to investigate the surface of the Red Planet. Finally, they’ll simulate the role of mission control as they attempt to program their robot to complete mission critical tasks.

Grades 9–12

- **Fascinating Physiology**: Discover all the unique and amazing things that the human body can do in this weeklong camp. Student participants will dissect a cat specimen and spend each day examining a different body system. Comparisons will be made between cats and humans as students learn more about amazing human attributes. Students will discuss the use of model organisms at medical research institutes such as Van Andel Institute.

At this time, we anticipate that Summer Camps will be delivered in person, adhering to COVID policies in place at that time. The registration price for each camp is \$60, with the exception of Fascinating Physiology, which is \$120 due to the cost of materials. For more information on VAI's Summer Camps, including their dates and times, please visit vaei.org.

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ABOUT VAN ANDEL INSTITUTE

Van Andel Institute (VAI) is an agile biomedical research and education organization that unleashes innovation to multiply impact. Established in Grand Rapids, Michigan, by the Van Andel family, VAI collaborates around the world to advance bold ideas in biomedicine and education. With a staff of more than 400 and a growing network of partners, VAI studies the origins of cancer, Parkinson's and other diseases and translates its findings into breakthrough prevention and treatment strategies to improve human health. The Graduate School at VAI offers a Ph.D. in molecular and cellular biology through a research-intensive, interdisciplinary program that prepares students for successful careers as independent investigators. VAI also is dedicated to creating classrooms where curiosity, creativity and critical thinking thrive, offering engaging programs for K-12 students and transformative professional development and instructional tools for teachers. Find out more about Van Andel Institute by visiting vai.org.