

PHYSICS NEWS FLASH

Rockets Get Youth Interested in Space

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By Serena Dai

Seventeen kids, grades four to six, crowd around the enthusiastic Paul Lewis as he brings out model rockets on the first day of Kids U Rockets! class.

“[The state doesn’t] teach this at school,” says Lewis, Director of Space Science Outreach. “Kids have an innate curiosity about space.”

Rockets! features three days of classes that culminate in a rocket launch in front of Ayres Hall. Lewis has been teaching the Rockets! class for seven years, and both he and the students seem to enjoy it. Lewis laughs easily, and nearly all the kids listen and actively ask questions despite seemingly distracted movement.

“The kids seem like sponges when they get here,” Lewis says. “They remember this stuff; it sticks with a lot of them.”

From history of rockets to rockets safety, the self-taught Lewis gives students plenty of astronomical background before the actual rocket building. With each piece of information, he details a real life example that goes with it; he shows videos, like a self-taped one of a rocket launch, and passes around many space-related items, such as a piece of foam used to cover an actual rocket before take-off.

“It’s important to talk to kids at this age to get them interested in science and to keep them interested,” says Lewis.

Even though some of the students signed up for the class because of their parents, all of them appeared thoroughly enthusiastic on the day of the final launch. A chorus of “whoa” and “ah” followed each blast off, and each delayed takeoff incited a series of “Houston, we have a problem.”

“The kids really light up [at the launch],” says Lewis. “That’s the best part.”

See the Rockets Photo Launch [Here](#).

