

Education doesn't take a summer break

Mother and children travel cross country from Washington for AU science camp

By Jan Ramming

SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

AURORA — They could have gone to Disney World or headed to the beach, but instead mom and kids packed up and came 2,000 miles to Aurora — for summer school.

"It's more fun than school," said 8-year-old Katherine Dudley. "We get to make slime."

Katherine and her 6-year-old brother Alexander are attending Aurora University's Young Scholars Program for gifted and talented students. Their mother, Tatiana Dudley, brought them all the way to Aurora from their home in Bainbridge Island, Wash.

"I'd done a lot of research on these types of summer camps, and it's hard to find a program like this for younger children," Dudley said. "Most of the programs that cater to bright students are for middle or high school ages, so this one is unique."

Dudley said she's glad that the program is available for her children, who at times are bored and frustrated in school.

"If you wait until high school for this kind of challenge, it may be too late," she said. "They are so curious and so willing at this young age, and who knows — this curiosity may be replaced by something else."

Katherine is enjoying the Physics and Chemistry class, where fourth-through eighth-grade students explore particle physics and radioactivity.

But ask the kids what they're really doing, and they'll tell you it's about making slime — and glop. "Glop expands when you add water," explains Katherine.

Alexander was busy with other preschoolers through second graders in the Wet 'N Wild class on the AU campus. The children use water, soap and bubbles to learn about things like surface tension.



PHOTOS BY STEVE ROSENBERG / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Katherine Dudley, 8, of Bainbridge Island, Wash., makes chime bells with string, plastic foam cups and a metal hanger at Aurora University's Young Scholars summer camp. The project involved properties of sound. Below, Katherine's brother Dudley, 6, shows off his counting skills during a Young Scholars session.

Alexander said he's been interested in science since he was 3. He'd like to be a scientist or a paleontologist when he grows up.

"I have a science kit at home and a microscope," he said.

But when he's not in his lab, he's out riding his bike or scooter. He really wants a bike with gears on it. (His sister already has one.)

Alexander's mom said the trip to Aurora was well worth the expense, for all of them.

"I like the way they come out of class — they're smiling and joking. That's what's important," Dudley said.

"And it's not just the kids that get into a like-minded group but the parents as well. I was able to talk to par-



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