Stem Scholar Foundation

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Ten of the brightest middle school science teachers from around the country are at WKU this week developing new ways to get students excited about STEM education.

Amy Bingham has more on the prestigious program in this week’s View from the Hill.

It’s called the National Stem Cell Foundation Scholars program and WKU was chosen to host it. More than 100 teachers applied but only ten could be selected. Now they are here for a week of learning that will have an immediate impact on their classrooms.

Stacy Clark-Thomas \ Middle School Teacher, Alaska

Rico Tyler \ Instructor

Santosh Zachariah \ Middle School Teacher, Washington

Dr. Julia Roberts \ Exec. Dir., Center for Gifted Studies

“Ultimately our purpose is to help them develop their own sense of creativity.”

Creativity is soaring this week at the National Stem Cell Foundation Scholars program.

“The ideas, that’s what I need, these fresh ideas.”

Stacy Clark-Thomas came all the way from Alaska. She is one of ten middle school science teachers selected for the inaugural program.

“It was exactly what I was looking for. I’ve been struggling with trying to get my kids to think at a higher level.”

Whether its building rockets….

“We’re showing them how to take a sprinkler valve you would find in a hardware store and turn it into a rocket launcher.”

Or building ipad microscopes…..

“taking lens from a laser pointer and turn their ipad or cell phone into a microscope”

…..two instructors are taking turns exploring the physical science and biological science behind the activities.

“Rico asks questions in a way that lets you think about what’s the intent of the lesson rather than ok it’s a cool activity, but what do you want the kids to learn and what skills do you want them to have coming out of it.”

The collaboration among the group provides even more learning.

“These teachers come with a wealth of strategies and ideas to share so what you’re getting is a community that’s being established.”

When it comes to professional development, the teachers agree this week of training is on a whole other level.

“I had been here three hours yesterday and was like man this is the best professional development I’ve ever been to.”

“Extremely humbling but stimulating as all get out because you are learning so much.”

The ten teachers will continue collaborating through social media and meet up in Washington D.C. in January to share some of their own classroom projects. The National Stem Cell Foundation is providing funding for this program at WKU for four more years.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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