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MEDIA ADVISORY

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Rainbow Days Hosts 168 Homeless Children for 26th Annual Kids' University

DALLAS – From June 27 through July 1, Rainbow Days was thrilled to host its **26th annual Kids' University**, a STEAM-themed educational summer camp experience that benefited **168 children** residing in local homeless and domestic violence shelters, transitional living sites and extended-stay motels.

Kids' University 2022 commenced with three days of engaging classes hosted on the campus of the **University of Texas at Dallas**. Each day, the campers gathered in small groups led by caring adult mentors and participated in interactive classes covering **STEAM educational topics** as well as career exploration. At this year's camp, educational classes explored an array of subjects such as computer animation, financial literacy, animal science, music, dance, physical education and more, including programming provided by The Artist Outreach and Challenge Island.



The Kids' University experience at UT Dallas culminated on June 30 with a **special graduation ceremony** in the Edith O'Donnell Arts and Technology Building. There, campers wore colorful caps and gowns, **received personalized diplomas** and walked across the stage to shake hands with UT Dallas' Dr. Nils Roemer, Dr. Holly Miori and Dr. Jonathan Palant. This experience inspired each child to envision themselves graduating from a higher education institution in the future.

The graduation ceremony also featured a **festive and encouraging commencement speech** delivered by Dr. Claudia K. Beeny, founder and executive director of **House of Shine**, a nonprofit with a mission to help people discover what makes them unique and how to leverage their "shine" for the good of their community. Claudia's birthday-themed address encouraged the campers to follow their dreams and celebrate the "gift of you."

Finally, the **career exploration** at Kids' University concluded on July 1 with a celebratory field trip to **KidZania USA** presented by **Southern Methodist University**. At KidZania's innovative facility, the campers explored more

than 100 career-themed roleplay activities that enabled them to experience and visualize a variety of careers they could pursue in the future. This year's event was the second annual field trip to KidZania sponsored by SMU as part of Kids' University.



Given both UT Dallas' and SMU's generous involvement with this year's camp, Kids' University 2022 represented an exciting **collaboration between two local universities for the betterment of children** who will become future leaders in the community and beyond.

One of the fundamental goals of Kids' University was to address a critical need of homeless children living at shelters: the lack of enriching, safe and fun summer activities. Kids' University gave campers the opportunity and space to **decompress and discover new things alongside positive adult mentors** in a fun, child-friendly setting away from the environment of a shelter.

Another goal of the week was to **introduce homeless children to higher education and life on a university campus**, which in turn helps encourage them to pursue the dream of college themselves. Kids' University gave children the opportunity to bolster their STEAM knowledge and consider the multitude of career and higher education paths that await them.

Rainbow Days would like to recognize the numerous supporters who made this special camp experience possible. Kids' University 2022 was generously sponsored in part by the **Dallas ISD Homeless Education Program** and **Women of Saint Michael**. Additionally, Rainbow Days cherishes its partnerships with **UT Dallas, KidZania USA** and **SMU**, which all hosted various Kids' University activities this year. Special thanks also go to the following foundations for their overall financial support of Rainbow Days' **Family Connection** program benefiting homeless children: **The Moody Foundation, The Rees-Jones Foundation, Citi, Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation, Capital for Kids, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas, Baron and Blue Foundation, In-N-Out Burger Foundation, Simmons Bank** and **United Way of Metropolitan Dallas**.



ABOUT RAINBOW DAYS: Kids' University is a program of **Rainbow Days**, a 501(c)(3) Dallas-based nonprofit organization. Founded in **1982**, Rainbow Days has a mission to help children and youth in adversity build coping skills and resilience to create positive futures. Through support groups, camps, **life enrichment programs** and critical needs services, Rainbow Days makes meaningful connections with at-risk and homeless children and youth and has positively impacted more than **241,000 kids in the Dallas area** to date. For more information, please visit www.RainbowDays.org or call (214) 887-0726.

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