Hi-Desert Star

Light, color, dinosaurs, action!

Museum holds free science program and dinosaur exhibit

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Museum educator Crystal Mason lectures Science Saturday attendees on optical illusions caused by bending light.

The Hi-Desert Nature Museum held the "Light and Color" Science Saturday program June 7 at the museum. Early arrivals enjoyed the "Hatching the Past" dinosaur exhibit in the gallery before the lecture started. Kids dressed up in dinosaur costumes, unearthed dinosaur eggs, touched real dinosaur bones and looked at artist's representations of dinosaurs, dinosaur eggs, nests, embryos and fossil specimens.

Museum educator Crystal Mason opened the class by explaining how what we see can be distorted when light is refracted or "bent" through glass. She had the class write "MOM" on a piece of paper. The children then rolled a glass bottle over the letters, which stretched the word very tall. When the bottle is lifted away from the paper, the word "MOM" is flipped over by the brain and looks like the word "WOW."

With the assistance of class attendee Joey Joosten, 12, of Joshua Tree, Mason demonstrated how light breaks into separate colored wave lengths when you sine a flashlight through a glass prism. The beam of light breaks into a rainbow.

"Beams of light contain all the colors of the rainbow even though they appear to be white. When the light is refracted through a prism, we can see the different wave lengths broken apart into a rainbow," Mason explained. "Red is the longest wave length and purple the shortest in the visible spectrum, and all the other colors are somewhere in between."

Using crayons, the children then drew rainbows with the correct color order of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple and violet.

After the class was over, children put on dinosaur costumes and horsed around with museum director Stefanie Ritter.

The next Science Saturday will be on the subject of dinosaurs from 11 to 11:30 a.m. June 21.