

# Taking off



Johnny White, coordinator for Vision Builder Adventures, talks about NASA to Young Women of Promise Summer campers before they launch rockets they built on Tuesday at Queen Street United Methodist Church. Photo by Janet S. Carter / The Free Press

## Kinston Promise Neighborhood hosts summer camp for eighth year

By Dustin George  
Staff Writer

This month, more than 150 Lenoir County children are participating in the eighth annual Camp Promise.

Hosted by Kinston Promise Neighborhood, the camp is split into five sites, each with its own unique activities for campers.

"We have a variety of activities — art, music, dance, academic focuses like our STEM camp and theater," Theresa Williams Bethea, executive director for Kinston Promise Neighborhood, said. "The number of students enrolled is up tremendously this year."

This week's campers placed a

special focus on science, technology, engineering and math themes for campers.

Johnny White, coordinator for Vision Builder Adventures, ran six camps in Kinston for Camp Promise, teaching students about NASA, aeronautics, robotics and more.

"It was good," White told The Free Press on Friday. "The campers, you know they are no different than kids in any other part of the state."

While teaching at the camps, White gave campers the opportunity to build and program Lego Mindstorms Robots and design and launch their own rockets.

"It's fun. They teach us lots of new things, and there's lots of activities," Joya Washington, 9, said on Tuesday while learning about astronauts NASA sent to the moon.

"You talk to them about extraordinary people, but those people are just like me and you," White said. "They just found what they are passionate about in life and did it. That's what we want to instill in the kids."

White said helping children find what they are interested in doing in life early can help them overcome any obstacles they may face at home or school and achieve success.

Later this month, campers will have an opportunity to tour Fayetteville State University and the Museum of History in Raleigh.

Camp Promise will end Friday, July 29 with an end of camp community celebration from 10 a.m. to noon at Queen Street United Methodist Church. The celebration will feature speakers and special presentations from this year's campers.

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