



# JCLC STEM LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

June 2023

SDUSD JOINT BRIGADE



# STARTING STRONG

From the 19th to 24th in June 2023, over 140 cadets from the seven Army JROTC programs in San Diego Unified School District and one from Mount Miguel High School in the Grossmont School District, attended the STEM Junior Cadet Leadership Challenge (JCLC) at the University of San Diego. Each cadet had been assigned their own communal dorms and attended regular VEX Robotics classes in addition to visits at various workplaces and facilities. Whilst practicing soft skills in the classroom, cadets learned about all kinds of STEM post-secondary options and pathways following life after high school.

The morning of the arrival on campus, cadets were placed into individual companies or unit groups; These units included Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Echo, Golf, and Mike Company. Among themselves were cadets that conducted leadership responsibilities among their peers known as company personnel, whose duties varied reflecting that of a military chain of command. Each cadet received their own dorm keys, dining cards, customized STEM camp backpacks, and lanyards upon arrival on-site.



# LEADERSHIP & CAREER ACTIVITIES



## GENERAL ATOMICS

Each cadet had the opportunity to visit General Atomics, whose company creates technological solutions for governmental and commercial applications. Did you know that each “step” to creating aircraft is singled down by several engineers trained in differing areas? That’s right! It’s never *just one* designing merchandise. Down to the running of motors to the aerodynamics of creating wing parts, each are run through by a group of engineers whose strengths construct the bigger creation of a product— yet these engineers may never come in contact with each other. Engineering is a team effort! Cadets were able to learn about the opportunities and different fields of engineering in the more than 100-acre site with over 25,000 employees.

## NAVFAC FACILITY

Cadets had the opportunity to visit the NAVFAC, located in Coronado, where local Seabees were able to inform cadets of their personal experiences in the Navy, more particularly, careers in the Construction field. Ranging from electricians to divers, these Seabees expressed the hard work of getting into the career field itself. Many of these sailors also shared their numerous deployments, some even able to work on humanitarian projects like building schools and homes for developing countries. They briefed on the importance of their jobs around the world and getting the chance to work everywhere, being “every branches’ best friend”. Cadets were able to walk away with a new-found appreciation for a career field most did not know about prior to their trip.



# U.S. COAST GUARD



On their visit to the United States Coast Guard Sector, cadets met with multiple Coast Guardsmen who spoke about their roles serving in the branch.

Cadets got a chance to tour a helicopter, delving into search-and-rescue along with coast patrol, and got to speak with a certain group who specialized in firearms. Many cadets even showed interest in joining the branch one day.

One of the most memorable parts of this trip was the opportunity to patch the “holey boat”. Riddled with holes, cadets were tasked to repair the punctures with only planks and hammers while being drenched in water. Another memorable aspect was the chance to drive a Coast Guard speed boat, under proper supervision, cadets zoomed through the waters!

Leaving in damp clothing, cadets felt “pumped up” and refreshed after spending their time with the water.

# ROBOTICS CHALLENGES

Throughout the entirety of JCLC, cadets participated in many VEX Robotics challenges and icebreaker tasks to further develop their engineering vocabularies and critical thinking skills. Students were given obstacles whilst constructing their robots (i.e. limitations, criteria, challenge requirements, etc) and had been encouraged to “find a solution” in a non-conventional way; Students were encouraged to let their “imagination” take over with the newfound engineering logic they’d been supplied. At the end of the week, each team comprised of four cadets had created a tri-fold poster entailing the curriculum they’d gone through during the camp whilst presenting to families and respected guests. Each team created a robot of their own and presented a sketch of their finished product.



# GRADUATION

On Saturday morning, June 24th 2023, each of the STEM Staff, Army Instructors, and cadets from all 6 companies gathered in the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice Rotunda to hear final speeches, say goodbyes, and celebrate their hard-earned graduation in front of friends and family. As cadets took their seats with their companies, the ceremony started off by first having cadets from each company come up and present slides for their designated activity and their experiences through JCLC. The ceremony also recognized the cadet with the highest morale and motivation within each company as they were called to the stage to receive their very own certificate.

Alongside the most motivated cadet from each company, the award for the most motivated company overall was highly favored and contested during the week; However, the celebration was not unheard as it went to Alpha Company for their chants, talent show act, and overall pride. As many acts were seen at the talent show, a Tap-Out featuring cadets from each company was held to determine the Best Drilled Cadet in JCLC which was presented during the ceremony to Kimberly Salgado Valencia! Alongside all the awards and celebration; every cadet from each company received their JCLC certificate and medal; The STEM Workers' efforts were recognized by the DAI as well as other guests of honor. The ceremony came to a close once the Brigade Commander dismissed them with concluding words as the cadets cherished their final memories in JCLC. The cadets then walked through the same doors they entered with their companies as they left with their school; Each left with fun experiences, friendships, and memories to last.

