

# 'Power Your Future'



The Clay Center for the Arts & Sciences' mobile Power Your Future unit visited the Tri-County YMCA in Scott Depot on Feb. 3. Courtesy photo

## Tri-County YMCA, Putnam County Schools bring exhibit to Scott Depot

The Tri-County YMCA, in conjunction with Putnam County Schools through the nonprofit group's after-school program, provided the students at Mountain View Elementary School a chance to learn more about the state's gas industry by hosting the Clay Center's Power Your Future mobile exhibit at the school on Feb. 3.

Students at Winfield, Scott Teays and Rock Branch elementary schools also received the same hands-on educational opportunity throughout the week, courtesy of a grant from Toyota USA Foundation.

Power Your Future is an innovative mobile exhibit that educates students across West Virginia, as well as Pennsylvania and Ohio, on the science behind the gas industry.

"It is the mission of the Tri-County YMCA to make sure our young people know what is out there for them as they grow up and plan for their future," said Cathy Stark, Executive Director of the Tri-County YMCA.

This unique exhibition on wheels uses interactive games and activities to take visitors on a journey through the exploration and extraction of natural gas, the engineering and technology of processing it and the many uses of this important natural resource found in West Virginia.

In addition to the unique activities inside the exhibit, a variety of other activities for students to engage in included iPad apps that focus on energy conservation, types of energy, how wind power works and more. There was



Mountain View Elementary School students in the Tri-County YMCA's after-school program learn about the state's gas industry inside the Power The Future mobile display vehicle. Courtesy photo

also a table of resource books for students to read that share information on renewable and non-renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, hydro-geothermal, biomass, coal, oil, nuclear and natural

gas. The interactive experiences are designed to test critical and logical thinking skills, team building and more as students participate in racing to separate natural gas into

some of its individual components, transforming a completed well site through land reclamation and working as a team to "troubleshoot" potential problems.

The student visits conclude

with a short, animated video clip of his or her future career in the gas industry, created with data collected in the experience. It allows them to "power their future" as they see themselves taking on a

variety of roles which could include anything from a well supervisor to a drilling engineer to a community relations specialist.

Teachers can use this data-collection feature to determine what their students have learned and what messages need reinforced in the classroom. Online curriculum can help them introduce students to the industry before their visits and extend learning after a visit.

The Power Your Future program is sponsored by ECA and EQT.

For information on sponsoring Power Your Future visits, contact Clay Center Corporate Relations Manager Derek Vance at [dvance@theclaycenter.org](mailto:dvance@theclaycenter.org) or 304-561-3532. To schedule a mobile exhibit visit for a school, call 304-561-3557 for pricing and availability.

The Tri-County YMCA offers an after-school program for 12 elementary schools throughout Putnam County. "Our after-school program provides the students a safe place after their school day is completed to begin any homework they may have been assigned or have additional educational opportunities, while being supervised until they can be picked up by a parent or guardian," Stark said. "We are hoping to expand the STEM training to more students during the next school year."

For more information on the Tri-County YMCA's after-school program, go to <http://tri-countymca.org/after-school.html>.

## WVU researcher creates Twitter bot platform for activists

Daily, news headlines speak of activists fighting for causes across the globe. Thanks to a West Virginia University researcher, their fight just got easier.

Saiph Savage, assistant professor of computer science and electrical engineering, has created Botivist – a platform that uses Twitter bots, a program used to produce automated posts to the site, to help activists find potential volunteers and request contributions.

"When I looked at the discussions taking place on Twitter, I realized that most people were just there to complain or mourn," said Savage. "I asked myself if we could create technology that



Savage

could mobilize these people to go from complaining to thinking about solutions."

The answer is yes.

Savage teamed up with Microsoft researcher Andres Monroy-Hernandez and Tobias Hollerer, professor of computer science at University of California Santa Barbara, to create a group of Twitter bots that targeted people who tweeted about government corruption in Latin America.

In total, 45 percent of bot communications received replies. Bots that gave direct

discussion prompts such as, "corruption isn't fought with street rallies! It's fought by being honest and transparent," had the highest response rates, more than 80 percent, from volunteers invested in the cause. Other strategies, like using human personas for the nonhuman bots, were not as successful.

"When Botivist used techniques designed to be persuasive and effective in direct human interaction, replies were low," said Savage. "By being less human, and more robotic, the bots received double the responses, showing us that people were happy to interact with bots as long as they didn't

pretend to be human." Little was known on the use of online bots in civic engagement before the study, but the results suggest the mechanism is here to stay. "As we saw in the study, the majority of people called to action by Botivist made relevant contributions to the discussion and began collaborating with other activists that were mutually contacted by a bot," said Savage. "Botivist is a tool that brings all of the little things together to create meaningful change in society."

Botivist has been featured in reports by the British Broadcasting Corporation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Review and

Vice.

The team is currently collaborating with the Wikimedia Foundation to learn how bots can be used to recruit volunteers to execute tasks for Wikipedia and People for the Ethical Treatment of Ani-

mals. PETA hopes to use Botivist to create a mentoring system among those wishing to make animal-friendly lifestyle changes.

(Source: [www.WVUToday.edu](http://www.WVUToday.edu))

**ANDREW'S FLOOR & WALL COVERING COMPANY**  
Since 1950  
*Our Family Helping Your Family or Business*

Locally Owned

Floors?

We've got you covered.

Mention this ad and receive **10% off Materials**

505 Central Ave., Chas., WV 25302 (at Five Corners) 304-343-5586  
[www.andrewsfloorcovering.com](http://www.andrewsfloorcovering.com)