

STEAM camp connects kids to learning and community in Hollywood

Help On the Go puts learning into motion

Laughter and the buzz of hands-on discovery filled The Salvation Army Hollywood Temple (California) Corps March 15 as children gathered for a free STEAM day camp, exploring science, technology, engineering, art and math through interactive activities.

[Hosted by volunteers from Help On the Go](#), a nonprofit focused on helping students grow academically and build confidence, the camp brought together 20 children ages 7-15 for a day of learning and fun.



At stations around the gym, volunteers guided attendees through activities from navigating robots through a maze to building marshmallow towers, creating paper helicopters and more.

At each station, participants earned tickets to redeem for prizes like games, electronics and building kits. Older participants also had the option to take on a longer project, building mini solar-powered cars.

“It’s a great way to bring more kids into the corps,” said Hollywood Temple Corps Officer Major Lorena Stickland, noting the event is part of the corps’ efforts to increase opportunities for local youth.

“We can connect kids to our programs and help them get involved so they know we’re here for them,” she said.



Kids race robots to the finish line of a maze. Photo by Haley Osness.

For some kids, the camp marked their first visit to The Salvation Army after learning about it through flyers, online posts and friends.

For 8-year-old Issac Cruz, who attended with a friend, one of the highlights of the day was making a bouncy ball, carefully choosing his own colors for the design.

“It’s fun because it’s something I’ve never done before,” he said before competing with others to see whose ball could bounce the highest.

Another first? Operating a remote-controlled robot through a maze, racing his friend to the finish line. Cruz placed first in his group, earning two tickets toward his desired prize, a basketball, worth 7.

Opening these kinds of doors for children to try new things is central to the work of Help on the Go, said CEO Julia Jung.

“Working with The Salvation Army helps us to bring these experiences directly to kids,” she said. “It also connects them to a place where they can continue to learn and be part of a nurturing environment.”

When Help On the Go goes out into the community for volunteering and outreach, Jung is supported by teams of Los Angeles-area high school students who make up the nonprofit, serving as volunteer mentors, tutors and leaders for younger children and their peers.

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In recent months, volunteers have [painted murals at The Salvation Army Siemon Center](#), hosted educational summer camps at the L.A. Red Shield, and, through their Washington-based music outreach group Classic4U, [performed concerts at Salvation Army housing facilities](#).

At the Hollywood Temple Corps, Project Muse—the art branch of Help On the Go—spent weeks transforming a once-blank learning center with a collection of murals.

Now, the space, featuring an underwater ocean scene and a sunflower field beneath the Hollywood sign, serves as an inviting place for youth to gather, study and relax for years to come.

“They’ve been a blessing to our corps,” Strickland said.

Through projects like these, Help On the Go strives for ways to brighten spaces and encourage connection, creativity and growth among youth.

“We look for those needs and gaps in the community and step in where we can,” Jung said. “Sometimes all it takes is a group effort.”

According to Jung, student volunteers help shape and develop activities and events, contributing ideas such as the STEAM stations—often drawing from experiences and activities they enjoyed as younger kids.

“It’s fun and meaningful for the kids and community members,” she said. “But it’s also helping our student volunteers become leaders.”



Help on The Go staff and student volunteers. Photo by Haley Osness.

Kayla Kim, a Help On the Go student leader, helped develop some of the stations—including a marble tower race—and guided younger participants throughout the STEAM camp as they tried new activities.

“We want to make sure the stations are both fun and something kids could learn from,” Kim said. “It’s cool to see that come to life.”

For Jennifer Rodriguez, the camp offered a chance to see her 11-year-old daughter, Jasmine, try things with confidence.

“She loves science,” Rodriguez said. “Seeing her have so much fun with the robots—I know she’ll be talking about it for a while.”

Rodriguez, a longtime member of the Hollywood Temple Corps, said she’s excited to see more opportunities like this for kids in the area.

“I know my daughter will tell her friends about it, and I’m sure other kids will too,” Rodriguez said. “That’s how things like this grow.”

Help On the Go has been invited back to host a summer Vacation Bible School at the corps.

“You can see how much something like this stays with kids,” Rodriguez said. “It’s not just one day—it sticks.”

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