

2016 Summer Playground Camp

For the summer of 2016, S.A.F.E. and the City of Merced joined hands in developing a low costing, youth recreation and education camp for the local kids of Merced. Youth were engaged in recreation, science, and skill development while participating in the inaugural city camp. The youth were addressed by the Merced Fire Department, Merced County Sheriff's Department, UC Merced Drone Lab, and many other local officials. The Summer Playground camp was a weekly rotational camp that consistently maintained previous week's participants as well as new incoming



participants. Kids met at Rahilly Park starting at 8:30am and were picked up after lunch at 12:30pm. The focus of the camp was placed on education through recreation and hands-on experiences. With every emerging recreation idea, the same question was asked, "How can we make it a educational learning experience?". Every time it was answered! And how the kids responded was better than words, big smiles and loud 'oohs and ahhs'.

The youth participants spent the last few days of each week traveling to UC Merced, Chafee Zoo, Island Water Park, and the Hilmar Cheese Factory. But what drew the attention of the kids, was not the arts and crafts, the playground, the recreation activities, but it was science experiments. Led by UC Merced Biology S.A.F.E. members, the science projects strived to inspire and educate the youth through excitement. As a large group, S.A.F.E., the City of Merced, and youth, combined towards creating filtration systems, model rockets, solar balloons, drones, and much more. With each experiment



kids learned how it worked, who studies and works on those type of science experiments, and how to become someone who works on those experiments. As the summer comes to an end, the debriefing of the past summer will close and the development for a bigger and better camp next year begins. The City of Merced and S.A.F.E. will look to expand to other facilities, as well as triple to quadruple in participant size.

If you have questions about this summer's upcoming camp, please feel free to contact one of SAFE's Leadership officers on our [website](#).