

## Student Scientists Kickoff the School Year at Kennedy Space Center



**Above- left to right:** Kayla Young, Kessonga Allen, and Jayshaun Prince standing in front of rocket boosters

Exploration of the universe is about learning about life beyond Earth. With the construction of the International Space Station, interest in astronomy is growing. This provides fertile ground for scientists in Ecotek Lab to develop and perform experiments that stretch their minds, such as testing anti-gravity concepts (water droplets suspended in midair or growing plants in a zero gravity environment).

While many of students in the City of Detroit were getting school supplies and registering for classes, student scientists Kessonga Allen, Kayla Young and Jayshaun Prince, all 5<sup>th</sup> graders in the Ecotek Lab program, kicked off the 2015-16 school year by spending the weekend (August 29-August 31) at the John F Kennedy Space Center in Titusville, Florida.

The student scientists got an up close view of the helipads, rocket technology and innovations that have been developed by engineers and scientists at the National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA). They also learned about the wildlife surrounding the space center. They saw alligators, manatees, snakes, turtles, sandhill cranes and bald eagles. To prepare for their visit the students conducted background research in a number of areas ranging from reviewing the structure of our planetary system and the history of the NASA space program to understanding physical features of planets and stars and analyzing the Earth orbiting cycle and phases of the moon. Jayshaun and Kessonga used their interest in computer technology to develop a 3D model of the Atlantis space shuttle and a telescope using TinkerCAD software, while Kayla used her interest in physics to design, build and launch rockets.

From August to November is hurricane season in the Caribbean and in the State of Florida. The students along with Mr. Keith Young, founder of the Ecotek Lab Program, braved 25 mph winds and rain from Tropical Storm Erika to locate and reinforce the barriers around sea turtle nests on Cape Canaveral National Seashore and Cocoa Beach. This experience helped the students understand the impact of weather patterns on wildlife in and around Kennedy Space Center.



Jayshaun, Kessonga and Kayla kneeling next to sea turtle nest



Jayshaun and Kessonga standing in front of Appollo 11 capsule



Jayshaun designing 3D model of Space Shuttle using TinkerCAD software in Ecotek Lab

### About the Ecotek Science Program

Ecotek is a science research lab program for young inventors and researchers in grades 5 thru 12. Student scientists work on projects aligned with the issues being addressed by world leaders at the United Nations. To learn more about Ecotek Lab go to <http://www.ecotek-us.com>