

TELLURIDE DAILY PLANET

WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 24, 2016

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 24

www.telluridedailyplanet.com

EDUCATION

ARDUINO, SOLIDWORKS AND JAVA- SCRIPT, OH MY!

*Pinhead Institute
offers computer
programming classes*

If you attended the TedX-TellurideLive simulcast last week, the name Arduino might sound familiar to you.

No, it's not a recently re-discovered South American rodent believed to have gone extinct, nor a new planetary addition to our solar system. Instead, it's an open-source electronic prototyping platform that received a number of excited mentions from TedX presenters discussing the latest groundbreaking technologies.

It is also the basis of the Pinhead Institute's Maker Wednesdays afterschool classes (Wednesdays, 3:30-5:30 p.m.) continuing through the end of March. In it, kids in 4th through 7th grades will use the Arduino microcontroller-based kits to build simple devices (think robots, thermometers, motion detectors) that interact with their environments by way of a combination of programming, circuits, actuators and sensors — in a sort of high-tech tinkering that can help kids develop the skills of creative thinking, problem solving and persistence.

"Kids get a thrill when they realize what they can handle on their own, and using Arduinos in our curriculum drastically increases what the students can design, build and make with their own two hands, a computer and a little circuit board," said Pinhead's executive director, Sarah Holbrooke.

With 3D tools touching more aspects of our lives and industries (entertainment, architecture, marketing and medicine, to name a few) than ever before, Pinhead is also excited to be offering an introductory

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Pinhead offers computer classes

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Getting Started with SolidWorks 3D modeling course for students ages 16 and older (Thursdays, 6-8 p.m.). Integral to the experiences had by a number of last summer's Pinhead Internship class in their placements, this industry-leading, computer-assisted design software is used by nearly 3 million product designers and engineers at 220,000 organizations around the world.

"Ever since word got out that Pinhead has a 3D printer and awesome classes for kids, grown ups have been asking us to teach them how to use the printer," Holbrooke said.

"SolidWorks is a vital first step in that process."

Building on the wide interest in and success of its basic computer coding program for 4th through 6th grade girls launched earlier this year, Pinhead has expanded the program to reach a wider age range. Computer Coding for Middle School Girls I (Wednesdays, 6-8 p.m.) will give girls in 7th and 8th grades an opportunity to learn the basics of computer programming and to gain a deeper understanding of how we program the machines that run our modern world. Computer Coding for Intermediate School Girls II (Mondays,

3:30-5:50 p.m.) will build upon previously acquired, basic skills and delve further into the HTML, CSS and JavaScript computer languages.

"I remind every girl coder coming through the Pinhead doors that the first computer programmers were women," said Holbrooke. "I'm proud to be part of a process that brings more girls to love coding; it makes their options limitless."

For more information on these or other Pinhead Institute programs, please visit www.pinheadinstitute.org or call 970-369-5190.