



## **Tropical Forest Report**

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of August 2021, e-Biome hosted its annual Summer of STEM camp with the theme of Climate Change and the Blue Economy. From Monday to Thursday, students participated in a variety of dynamic and engaging sessions lasting four hours. The tutors helped the camp achieve its goal of creating an enjoyable, diverse, and challenging learning environment with tutoring sessions, guest presentations, and an environmental advocacy project. The camp's success was due to the campers' and tutors' active participation in the learning process, which resulted in a nurturing bond. Furthermore, the social platforms (Zoom and Google Classroom) used during the camp enabled students to freely interact with the learning material as well as tutors. The recordings of the sessions along with assignments and supplementary material was posted on the Google classroom platform, facilitating greater flexibility of the learning process. The complexity of the learning process for the campers varied based on the group of students. Based on age, campers were assigned to two groups, Wetlands, and Tropical Forest. Eight kids made comprised the tropical forest group, with six remaining active throughout the program. The tropical forest group consisted of eight students, with six students remaining active throughout the program.

The commencement of the camp began on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August with a welcome ceremony for all campers. Students learned about the structure of the program. The first week went well, with Tropical Forest campers participating in a variety of activities that covered all three of the camp's sub-themes. During the STEM Career Symposium, campers learned about the field of marine biology through an interactive presentation by Ms. Bowman. There were a few challenges with some students and tutors accessing the Google Classroom platform, but they were all rectified. In addition, the robotics presenter was unavailable. The session was replaced with a fun and interactive STEM activity, where

the students engaged in an environmental debate. Despite the technical problems, the week was a success with campers showing a high rate of punctuality and involvement.

Students were more interested in the tutoring and TouchWiz sessions in the second week, extending the camp's success. With guest presenters from the University of Technology and the University of the West Indies, students learned about the stages of animation and app development. Different sessions such as Marine Life and Plastics, and Global Environmental Change, allowed campers to continue their exploration of the complexity of climate change. The knowledge of climate change was further applied in a climate change campaign design session, where campers learned about the different aspects of advocacy and project management. Notably, students demonstrated their leadership and communication skills by engaging in brainstorming sessions for their campaign on the weekends. Despite the high level of participation, some students were absent from some sessions based on conflicting schedules and internet connectivity. This was remediated with tutors offering supplemental support on the weekends.

The final week of camp was marked by high achievement and collaboration among students, tutors, and presenters. Students enthusiastically participated in several career symposium sessions, which explored a variety of scientific career paths. As the deadlines for various assignments fostered the growth of the campers' resilience, the campers adapted to the dynamics of the learning process. These traits were demonstrated during their career presentations and the environmental campaign, where campers curated creative and insightful presentations. This level of excellence was further reflected in the award ceremony, where tropical forest campers won numerous awards. Overall, the holistic development of the campers was fostered during the camp and, their growth was visible at the end.