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Rio Hondo College Paper Airplane Workshops Aim to Teach Whittier Elementary Students Practical Aerodynamics

WHITTIER – Paper planes will loop-the-loop, soar for long distances and perform acrobatics when Rio Hondo College auto experts hold four aerodynamics workshops from **8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Friday, Dec. 11** at East Whittier City School District’s Scott Avenue Elementary School.

Professor John Frala and the automotive team will guide 120 fourth-graders and 90 fifth-graders in the art and science of paper airplane creation, using four color-coded designs so students can explore how different configurations generate spectacularly different flight patterns.

Frala said the team chose paper airplanes as a fun way to introduce concepts integral to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields – areas of increasing demand for careers and of increasing focus at colleges.

“This is a great way for us to reach out to the kids, to get them excited about STEM topics,” Frala said. “From there, they can take advantage of our summer STEM programs, enroll in our STEM classes at Rio Hondo and, we hope, see STEM fields as a possible career choice for themselves.”

Frala, who worked for more than two decades in the auto industry, is recognized nationally for his work in alternative-fuels education. In 2015, he led a Rio Hondo College team that won a National Science Foundation grant to create and evaluate work-based training tools for alternative-fuels automotive technology students. He is a member of California’s Green Team, an advisory group dedicated to creating a system of hydrogen fuel stations.

“This exciting program is part of a broader outreach effort conducted by education leaders at Rio Hondo College, designed to inspire the young students in our community,” said Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. “These workshops combine the best in hands-on instruction with a science foundation.”

Previous outreach programs include coding camps led by Computer Science Professor Dr. Shin Liu and the Rio Hondo College Computer Science Club.

The Dec. 11 workshops will begin with a discussion of aerodynamics, followed by plane building and flying in the cafeteria at Scott Avenue Elementary, 11701 Scott Ave., Whittier.

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Rio Hondo College, located in Whittier, California, is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit www.riohondo.edu.