

# Depot Workshop Gets Kids On The Right Track

Story and photo by Will Plazewski

\* For nine days this month teacher Sarah Christiansen, along with her teenage assistants, Shawn the Conductor and Emma the Engineer, led a group of middle school students on a journey through the world of math at the historic San Ann Depot.

As a teacher, Christiansen had wanted to develop a program like this ever since she first started noticing a general deficit in math skills among the incoming students to her classes.

"Math is everywhere and I wanted to create a way to put young minds at ease," she said.

This includes games, like the one she created that is similar to Battleship, called "Derail The Train." It teaches kids about the X and Y coordinates. She also has "passengers" come along for the ride, including Reactors, draftsmen and engineers. They are aboard to talk about the part math plays in their jobs.

"Unfortunately many children think that math is just a bunch of problems in a text book, but that attitude can wind up needlessly creating issues for them later in life," Christiansen said. For her part she hopes to change that negative impression.

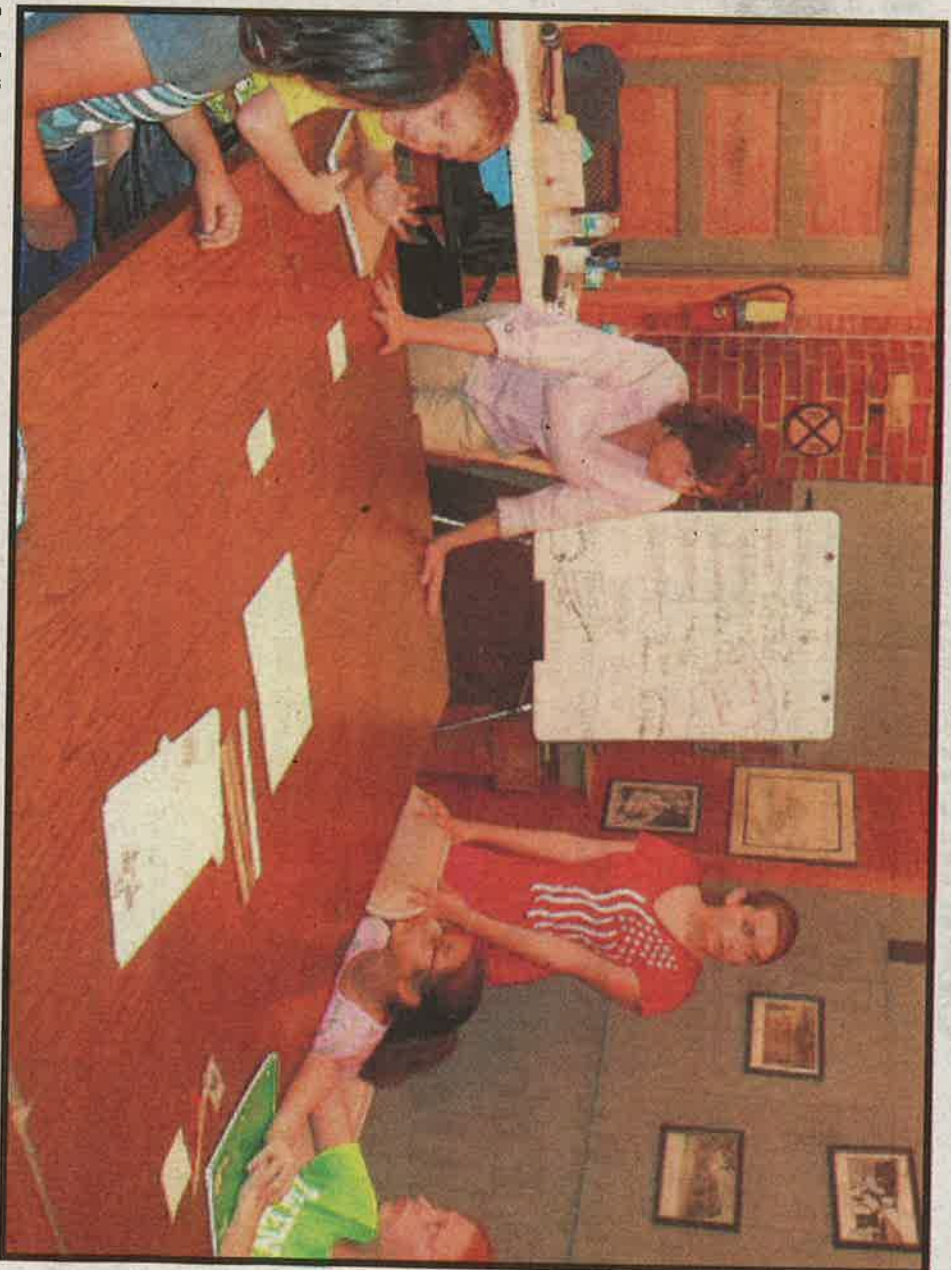
The energetic 10-year teaching veteran currently is a full-time tutor, through her company YesYouCanTutoring.com. This summer workshop however had a unique aspect to it; it was free.

"I just felt like now was the right time for me to give something back to the community," she said.

The families of the 11 children enrolled in the workshop drove in from as far away as Land O'Lakes to take advantage of the opportunity. Christiansen plans to offer the program again next summer and to build on what she has learned this first time down at the depot.

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father, "but at a certain point, we knew methods. He merely continued to work because of a bad performance but However he is not opposed to trying



Sarah Christiansen and Emma "The Engineer," standing, right, go through a math exercise with middle schoolers during a free workshop at the San Antonio Depot.