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CHEYENNE - Did you know that, with a strong enough magnet, you can actually separate the iron from your breakfast cereal?

That's just one of the things 60 local children learned firsthand Wednesday, courtesy of Starbase and the University of Wyoming's Science Posse.

Sponsored by the Wyoming National Guard, Starbase hosts classes for elementary-aged children to learn more about science, technology, engineering and math. But Wednesday's program was a little different, with kids moving from classroom to classroom to take part in four different activities put on by the UW Science Posse.

"There's so many kids excited about science and math, it was an idea to give kids the chance to do more science activities," said Barb Maquer, director of Starbase, which is based out of the Raper Armory in northeast Cheyenne.

In one room, Science Posse member Trevor Levalley performed the aforementioned cereal experiment, instructing students to crush cereal up in plastic bags.

"We crush it up and put it in our cereal," Levalley said, explaining the role iron plays in our diet. "But what we're going to do today is pull it out."

After adding a little water to their bags, the students passed powerful neodymium magnets over the cereal, coaxing bits of pure iron from the mashed flakes, to their amazement.

Alex Runyan, 9, came to Starbase with his mother, Jen. Jen said they came out because Alex already has a keen interest in science - especially rocks.

"It's nice to see these are college kids using their degrees so our kids can learn as well," Jen said, turning to Alex. "You didn't know you were eating a rock, did you?"

Alex conceded that he didn't before, but he knows now.

"They put iron in food," he concluded. "And it helps us."

In another room, Michael Huntington used a large U-shaped ramp and a set of metal balls to demonstrate the properties of energy. Explaining how kinetic energy can be converted to heat, he asked two children to hold a piece of paper across the bottom of the ramp, while two more dropped balls from either end.

When the two balls rolled down the ramp and collided at the bottom, the paper was left with a small hole in it. Huntington held the paper aloft, asking the kids to smell it.

"What happened?" he asked.

"It's like it's burned!" one child replied.

"Energy burned the paper!" another said.

Andrew Cassidy, 9, said he was familiar with the idea of energy before, but he was surprised to know it could be used in such a way.

"I had no idea heat goes through energy," he said. "It was pretty cool."

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Author James Chilton

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