

# InfoAge welcomes schools for new education programs

Students learn valuable skills

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THE COAST STAR

**WALL TOWNSHIP** — On May 25, students from Toms River High School East's Engineering Academy and High School North's Arts Academy broke new ground by spending the entire school day at InfoAge Science and History Museums, engaging in a design project that flowed through every museum.

InfoAge Science and History Museums volunteer Education Specialist and former science teacher of 34 years, Marc Natanagara, helps organize the trips.

While school tours in previous years were largely self-guided, Mr. Natanagara now helps trip organizers connect the school's curriculum with the thousands of one-of-a-kind resources, from artifacts to volunteers, at InfoAge.

According to Mr. Natanagara, InfoAge saw a surge of field trips this spring, filling their calendar for the final four months of the school year. The increase in interest seems to be based both on educators wanting students to have authentic in-person experiences after months of



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**Students from Toms River learn how to solder LED lights as part of their school's field trip to the museum, which asked them to conceive of and design a scale diorama representing an improvement to an existing exhibit or a proposed new exhibit at InfoAge.**

virtual learning as well as the non-profit's new education initiatives and outreach.

"Each school we have worked with this year has wanted to try something unique with students at InfoAge. We learn from that, so as an institution, our capacity

to offer different experiences grows with each visit," said Mr. Natanagara.

"The volunteer guides in each of our museums are always receptive to new challenges. They go out of their way to tailor a tour to each

group and loved the idea of a holistic project."

For the Toms River challenge, students were tasked with designing a new museum, exhibit, or display for InfoAge based on what interested them and what they experienced.

Docents provided behind-the-scenes insight on display design, and students offered critical feedback on what worked and didn't work as well for them educationally.

The day and project concluded in three spaces most casual visitors don't typically see: the classroom lab, the Computer Deconstruction Lab maker-space, and the podcast studio, all in the former Army building #9059.

Guided by Natanagara, CDI educator Dan Jacobs, and staff from Toms River, students built a model display, learned to solder LEDs and switches and recorded a podcast narrative of their creation. The district is already planning to book two more trips in the upcoming school year.

Schools interested in getting on the 2022-2023 field trip calendar can go to <https://infoage.org/educators>

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