

## Press Release



### **Dubai Educational Zone launches first ever ‘Smart Summer 2014’ camp**

***ICDL’s program on Social Networking Platforms and Online Security to be camp’s key focus***

March 17, 2014

Dubai Educational Zone (DEZ) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ICDL GCC Foundation, an organisation that promotes digital skills and cyber safety across the Gulf region and Iraq, and the National Academy for Research and Development (NARD) in Dubai, for the launch of the first summer camp named as ‘Smart Summer 2014,’ that will be held for four weeks in early August 2014 from 3 to 28.

The MoU was signed by H.E. Dr. Ahmad Eid Al Mansouri, Director of Dubai Educational Zone, Jamil Ezzo, Director General of the ICDL Foundation, and Dr. Najwa Diab, Chief Executive of NARD in a formal ceremony held at the DEZ headquarters in Al Qusais. The event reflects the strategic partnership between the three parties strengthened by a common goal, which is to increase the awareness about information technology and cyber safety.

Under the terms of the MoU the summer camp will be held at the educational zone with the main aim of keeping the youth busy and occupied during the summer vacation with useful activities as well as learning technical skills that will benefit them in their educational and personal lives. The camp will also focus on imparting awareness and skills related to the use of computer, Internet and modern smart devices along with the proper use of social networking sites, in an effective, responsible, ethical and secure manner. DEZ, ICDL GCC Foundation and NARD consider it as their duty to protect young people from potential online risks and as a service to the UAE's strategy in promoting the process of teaching and learning to keep pace with accelerated technological development.

The Summer Camp will focus on practical training, skills development and acquiring mechanisms, which will help children in self-learning and research with information and communication technology (ICT). The camp will enable them to participate in productive activities in a classroom-free environment away from school and equip them with the skills to facilitate their engagement in the University environment. The camp will help the youth with the development of social relationships with their peers in a productive educational-entertainment atmosphere.

“Social media and mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets have become an essential part of everyday life for our children. The safe use of the Internet and the digital identification skills are some of the most pressing issues that we, as responsible adults, have to emphasize on children by educating them and raising awareness about correct and optimum use of technology,” said H.E. Dr. Ahmad Eid Al Mansouri. “Summer camp will give our children a useful and productive opportunity to utilize some of their time in learning and entertainment in a pleasant atmosphere provided by the camp.”

H.E.Dr. Mansouri added: “The ICDL international programs implemented in the camp will also contribute towards upgrading of the technical skills of the involved students, which will help them become independent learners and serious researchers in digital educational resources. The participants will not only acquire more cyber awareness, new technical skills and entertainment this summer, but they will also obtain an internationally recognized certificate.”

Jamil Ezzo said: “We are very happy with this partnership, which will help in the efforts to raise awareness on online safety and the correct, effective, and responsible usage of social media by the students of public schools in Dubai. Social media platforms and smart devices have become part of our children’s daily life and have their advantages, disadvantages and risks. Youth, generally, are active on these platforms without any adult supervision and guidance, and we will work hand in hand with the officials of the DEZ and the NARD to create a distinctive success-story through this project on summer of 2014.”

“NARD is pleased to launch this 2014 summer camp initiative with DEZ and ICDL GCC Foundation. All the necessary preparations have been completed according to the highest professional standards in order to provide the best programs and events for the participants, and of course all the conditions are met to ensure the safety and security of the participating students,” said Dr. Najwa Diab.

She further added: “The camp is created to recognize the importance of training and investment in the development of human brains’ capacity. We believe in the need to educate the younger generation in keeping pace with modern developments and to prepare a smart generation of the future, which is capable of understanding and acknowledging modern technology. The camp falls in line with the vision of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, to shift towards a smart government and smart cities, which will ultimately lead to smart societies. We must, therefore, prepare a smart and creative generation to lead and manage this shift.”

She concluded: “There is no doubt that the summer camp is an essential element of modern education that integrates entertainment and recreation for the students with useful and important information that expand their horizons, refine and develop their talents and knowledge, and support the spirit of self-reliance and personal independence.”

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