

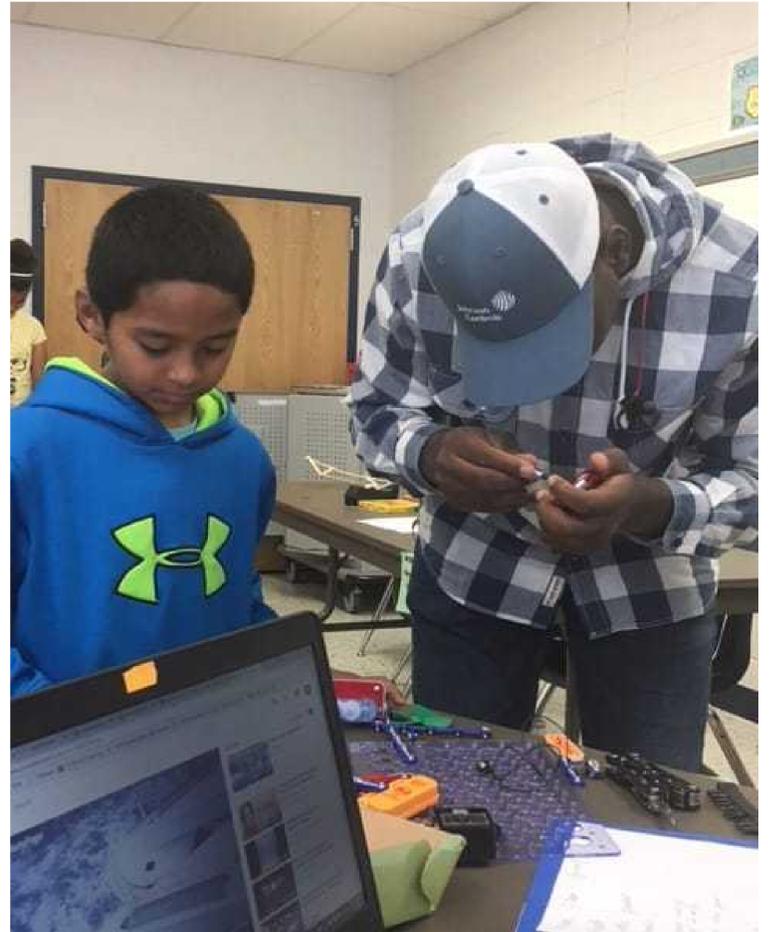
STEMbassadors Make an Impact this Summer

Since its inception in 2013, the STEMbassadors program has been connecting high school students with a zeal for STEM with elementary and middle school learners in the northern Virginia area. This summer, high schoolers from more than a dozen area schools participated in the STEMbassadors program. For three weeks, these 135 volunteers guided young learners through various activities, helping foster an appreciation for STEM and a love for learning among hundreds of students at 28 elementary and middle schools. This summer marked the Partnership Fund's second year sponsoring the program.

From courses such as Budding Botanist, Monster Storms, and Engineering is Elementary, STEMbassadors offers the unique opportunity for local high school students to apply their STEM knowledge beyond the classroom and facilitate hands-on learning activities. "I loved getting hands on experience and learning different programs, such as VEX robotics and KANO computers. I loved being able to work with the kids on something educational, as I knew I was making an impact on their learning," said one STEMbassador from TJHSST. While excited to share their passion for STEM with budding young innovators, many STEMbassadors were surprised by just how rewarding they found the experience. One student from Woodson High School shared that the opportunity to work with her group of enthusiastic young learners "never failed to make [her] smile." Another STEMbassador from TJHSST appreciated "the feeling of having made a difference each day that [she] was there."

While STEMbassadors found the opportunity to teach and engage with elementary and middle school students fulfilling, many also expressed an appreciation for the dedicated teachers who led the summer STEM programs. One TJ STEMbassador found the volunteer environment "very supportive and optimistic," and another from Hayfield High School was impressed by the commitment of the teachers and inspired by "how genuinely kind and motivated the teachers were. They really cared about the program and making it a fulfilling experience for the kids. I liked how they made sure the kids were always having a good time, doing experiments the kids would enjoy, and teaching them about things they found interesting. I liked how happy and excited everyone was during the entirety of the camp." Teachers were similarly appreciative of STEMbassadors. A teacher from Forestdale Elementary described her STEMbassadors as "great role models for our students and wonderful helpers!" And another admitted that her school "could not have pulled off such a successful camp without the help of our STEMbassadors."

If you are interested in becoming a STEMbassador or would like to host STEMbassadors at your school next summer, please contact Jane Ritt, the Partnership Fund's STEM Outreach and Administrative Coordinator, at jritt@fcps.edu.



Paul Adubi from George C. Marshall High School helps a student at Mount Eagle Elementary School through a STEM project. Adubi enjoyed "getting to work with children on a subject that [he] loved."