

Community & Outreach

Community outreach is the foundation of our robotics program. The Water Dogs' motto is - "We are more than just robots." Our team strives to shape our community through STEM education and hopes that by sharing our love for STEM with our community, we will encourage the next generation to enjoy STEM and possibly pursue STEM careers. Throughout the year, The Water Dogs participated in various types of community outreach and STEM spreading opportunities, accumulating over 300 hours of STEM service. When it comes to spreading the world of STEM, we are very passionate about FIRST's core values of Discovery, Innovation, Impact, Inclusion, Teamwork, and Fun, as well as the idea of Gracious Professionalism, and use these guiding principles in educating the younger generation in STEM. To help spread these core values, our team has mentored FIRST LEGO League (FLL) teams for the past four years. This year, our program grew from seven to eight FLL teams, allowing us to spread STEM to over 40 students in our community, ranging in ages from 4 to 14 years old. During the bi-weekly meetings, we create and execute lesson plans to teach our young pups about the engineering design process, basic coding, and the foundations of STEM and how they are used. In addition to our FLL teams, we hold an annual week-long Recruitment Camp, which introduces students interested in joining our program to basic robotics concepts, an understanding of programming, learning CAD, building robots, and using hardware tools. The camp is great preparation for what new members can expect from participating in our robotics program and allows us to share more STEM opportunities with our community. The Water Dogs also shared with over 500 students, ages 6 through 12, the importance of STEM by sharing hands-on examples of innovation through a set of fun crafts while demoing at the University of Central Florida STEM Day. We taught students the importance of the design process by encouraging them to experiment with different paper airplanes, craft stick catapults, and craft stick helicopter designs, inspiring the students to take in various factors and ideas to explore when considering design in the future. At the Orlando Science Center's Otronicon Expo, team members interacted with students and parents, answering questions about our program and giving advice on how to get students involved in local STEM events. We also encouraged our FLL students to demo their robots and talk about their experience with STEM at the expo, allowing them the opportunity to also spread their love for STEM with their peers. We were fortunate to have our city's mayor, Megan Sladek, visit our build space; allowing us to share information about our program with her and discuss ways in which we can further spread STEM in our local community. The Water Dogs are excited to continue to spread STEM in our community and look forward to finding new ways to engage with our community, both locally and beyond in the coming year.