

## **Community & Outreach**

Community outreach is the cornerstone of our robotics program. The Water Dogs live by the motto: “We are more than just robots.” Our team is passionate about shaping our community through STEM education, and sharing our love for STEM to inspire the next generation to explore and pursue careers within the STEM fields. Guided by the FIRST core values—Discovery, Innovation, Impact, Inclusion, Teamwork, and Fun—and the principle of Gracious Professionalism, we focus on educating and inspiring younger generations in STEM. For the past five years, we have mentored FIRST LEGO League (FLL) teams, and this year, we supported two FLL Challenge teams, both of which advanced to regionals. Through bi-weekly meetings, we created lesson plans to teach these young innovators, ages 9 to 14, about the engineering design process, basic coding, and STEM fundamentals. We expanded our outreach internationally by partnering with Technomatic Academy in Málaga, Spain, which focuses on bringing STEM education to underprivileged children with limited access to these opportunities. As part of this collaboration, we created a 3D printing and CAD course, donated a 3D printer, and provided support to help them integrate this technology into their curriculum. Locally, we partnered with Seminole Science Charter School, which plans to open a high school in 2026, to help them plan and budget for an FTC team. Additionally, we collaborated with three FTC teams in Mumbai, India, offering mentorship and guidance as they prepared for their first competitions, leveraging our experience as a veteran U.S. robotics team. Our team also engaged in community outreach at the Oviedo Farmers Market, connecting with local families and sharing the excitement of STEM. We demonstrated hands-on STEM concepts to over 500 students, ages 6 to 12, during the University of Central Florida STEM Day, where we introduced the engineering design process through various activities, like paper airplane experiments, craft stick catapults, and helicopter designs. At the Orlando Science Center’s Otronicon Expo, we engaged with students and parents, answered questions about our program, and provided advice on how to get involved in STEM activities. We also encourage our FLL students to showcase their robots and share their experiences with STEM, inspiring their peers to explore these fields. Additionally, we had the privilege of hosting our city’s mayor, Megan Sladek, at our building space, where we discussed ways to further spread STEM within our local community. The Water Dogs are committed to continuing our outreach efforts, locally and globally, and are excited to find new ways to inspire and engage in the year ahead.