

SPOTLIGHT STEM

December 2024

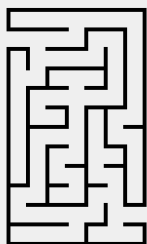
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Vol 3 Issue 2

EXPERIENCE PINELLAS SPARKS EXCELLENCE



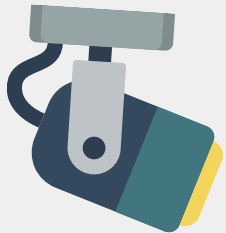
Almost 4,000 families took part in the Experience PCS event, a day filled with family fun designed to explore activities and opportunities that enhance the student experience. Attendees enjoyed music, games, fashion, STEM activities, as well as art, academic, culinary events, and competitions.



What's In This Month's Issue:

- Experience PCS
- Did You Know?
 - FIRST LEGO League
- FLL Competition
- STEM Explorer Clubs
- Upcoming Events
 - Winter Break
 - STEM Explorer Fest
 - Brick Battle
- Career Connections
 - Computer Programmers





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DID YOU KNOW?



FIRST® (For Inspiration & Recognition of Science & Technology) LEGO® League introduces students from grades K-12 to the fascinating world of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) through engaging, hands-on activities. Participants gain valuable problem-solving experience through a structured global robotics program, enabling students and teachers to collaborate for a brighter future.

With three divisions—Discover, Explore, and Challenge—students not only grasp essential STEM concepts but also apply their knowledge in an exciting competitive setting. They develop crucial skills in learning, confidence, and teamwork. The FIRST LEGO League program motivates young minds to delve into and enhance their critical thinking, coding, and design skills through interactive STEM education and robotics.

On December 7th, over a dozen Pinellas County Schools STEM Explorer Club teams participated in the qualifiers, with seven qualifying for the upcoming regional tournament next month at Shorecrest Preparatory School. Congratulations to all of the schools who participated and to the teams awarded "Golden Tickets" to the Regional Championships:

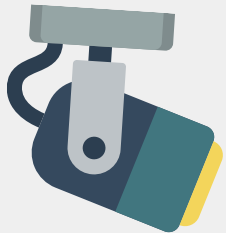
- **Perkins Elementary** – Ware's Wizards - Coaches: Anne Ware and Madison Caffey
- **Clearwater Fundamental Middle** – Radioactive Trash Pandas - Coach: Rick Preil
- **John Hopkins Middle** – Techno Trojans - Coaches: Donna Jo East and Ivo Decarlis
- **Safety Harbor Middle** – Brick Rays - Coach: Jodi Diaz (team sponsor: Tampa Bay Rays)
- **East Lake Middle** – Engineer Eagles - Coach: Mike Dority
- **Fitzgerald Middle** – Fitzgerald Phantoms - Coach: Chelsea Hinkins
- **Osceola Middle** – Osceola Middle School Chiefs - Coaches: Camille Costi and Jami Waddell

Additionally, two teams received special awards:

- The Perkins Elementary team earned the Excellence in Engineering Award and the Coach/Mentor Award.
- The Safety Harbor Middle Brick Rays secured the Robot Design Award.

These teams will compete in the FIRST LEGO West Florida Regional Championship on Saturday, January 18, 2025.



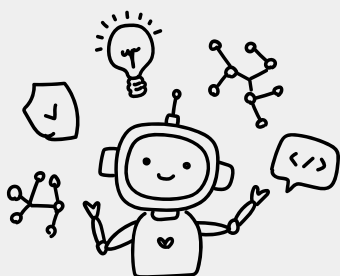


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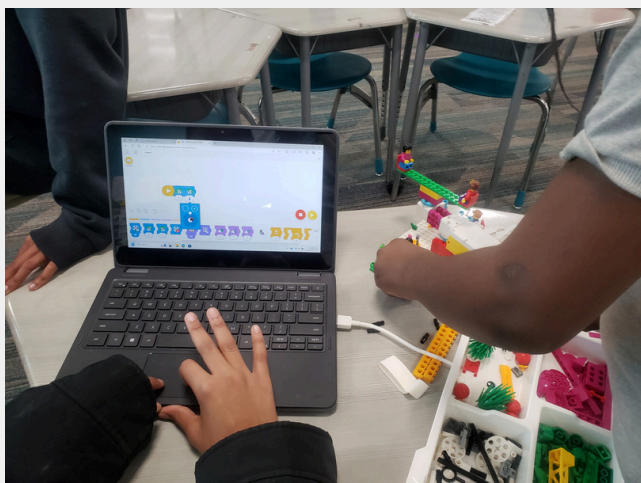
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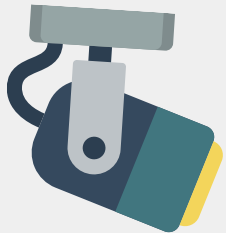


Palm Harbor University High School students collaborate with fourth and fifth graders from the STEM Explorer Club at **Lake Saint George Elementary School** to introduce the fundamentals of robotics. Under the guidance of facilitator Bernadette Lewis, documents the journey of her young explorers, as they prepare to become a formidable team.



Melrose Elementary School's 4-5 STEM Explorer Club is coding their Twirling Teacups with LEGO Education SPIKE Essentials. Lorraine Grizzle is at the helm, guiding these aspiring programmers.



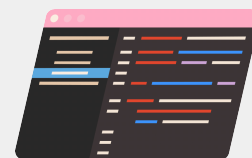


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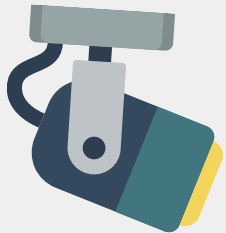


During Computer Literacy Week, over 50 students at **Perkins Elementary School**, involved in the STEM Explorer Club and the Girls Who Code Club, elevate their coding skills by taking part in the Hour of Code challenge! With facilitator Anne Ware capturing their experiences, these young pioneers are set to achieve remarkable success.

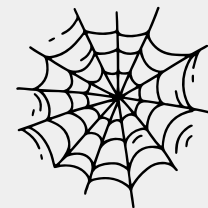


Lilia Cagle and her STEM Explorer Club students at **Jamerson Elementary School** are engaging in the engineering design process to create working pinball machines, which they will showcase at the STEM Expo. The students have been putting in a lot of hard work, applying principles of physics, mathematics, and creativity to build their machines. Each pinball machine stands as a testament to their creativity.





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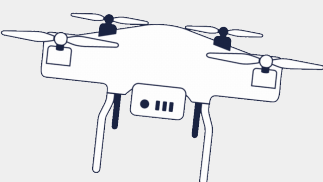
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Bear Creek Elementary School's STEM Explorer Club students are eager to compete in Brick Battle while learning to build and code LEGO robots. Facilitator Lissa Bray captured photos of the young programmers as they enthusiastically immersed themselves in their projects.



Fairmount Park Elementary School's STEM Explorer Club ventured into the realm of unmanned aerial vehicles by designing and piloting their own drones. Facilitator Shannon Girardello documented the students' enthusiasm as they embraced their roles as engineers.



UPCOMING EVENTS

WINTER HOLIDAYS

No School for Students

December 23, 2024 -
January 3, 2025

Hurricane Make-Up Day
School in Session

January 6, 2025

3rd Annual
STEM Explorer Festival

January 18, 2025

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
No School for Students

January 20, 2025



FREE EVENT

FOR ALL AGES

STEM EXPLORER FEST

TOUCH-A-TRUCK WATER FESTIVAL

A collaboration between the City of Largo, Pinellas County Schools and Florida Water Environment Association

SENSORY FRIENDLY TIME
(HOURS FREE)
10am-12pm

Saturday
January 18 • 10am-2pm

Three hands-on, family friendly events in one location!
Explore trucks, participate in STEM activities, games, music,
food & more! Food and beverage vendors on-site.

LARGO CENTRAL PARK
101 CENTRAL PARK DRIVE
LARGOEVENTS.COM | (727)587-6740 x5014

PCS
PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS

Florida Water Environment Association

Play!
#playlargo



FOR MORE VISIT: <https://www.pcsb.org/stem>

CAREER CONNECTIONS

CAREER CONNECTIONS

Computer Programmers

Computer programmers write, modify, and test code and scripts that allow computer software and applications to function properly. They turn the designs created by software developers and engineers into instructions that a computer can follow. In addition, programmers run tests to ensure that newly created applications and software produce the expected results. If the products do not work correctly, programmers check the code or scripts for mistakes and modify them.

Computer programmers typically do the following:

- Write programs in a variety of computer languages, such as C++ and Java
- Update and expand existing programs
- Test programs for errors and fix the faulty lines of computer code
- Create, modify, and test code or scripts in software that simplifies development

Average Annual Salary: \$99,700



U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

