



Northrop Grumman Foundation Announces Innovative STEM eMentoring Program

TryEngineering Together will connect 170 middle school students to Northrop Grumman employee volunteers

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*Stephanie Fitzsimmons,
Northrop Grumman*

The Northrop Grumman Foundation, in partnership with Cricket Media and Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), is expanding its commitment to providing students with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning opportunities by implementing an innovative eMentoring program, TryEngineering Together.

Launching in the fall of 2019, TryEngineering Together will pair students in grades 6-8 with 170 Northrop Grumman volunteers who will mentor students virtually. The program uses a safe and secure two-way digital platform, which was co-designed by Cricket Media and IEEE. Through this eMentoring program, employees will be able to share their STEM expertise with students as they collaboratively work

through high-quality curriculum and discuss hands-on activities.

“Employees sharing their individual STEM experiences and career paths could have a tremendous impact on students who may not have exposure to STEM professionals and personal guidance,” said Stephanie Fitzsimmons, K-12 STEM education programs manager, Northrop Grumman. “A key advantage of the TryEngineering Together program is its convenience for employees to effectively provide valuable advice, lessons and feedback to students, regardless of where either are located.”

Research shows that by eighth grade nearly 50 percent of students lose interest in STEM or deem it irrelevant to their education or career plans. As a result, sparking students’ interest in STEM and building their confidence before completing middle school is imperative to ensure an active pursuit of the STEM field. TryEngineering Together hopes to address this critical issue by engaging students with professionals who can help connect STEM’s application in the real world.

“This unique mentoring program is an excellent way for our employees, who are eager to volunteer, to support and champion STEM education virtually in communities where we work and live,” said Sandra Evers-Manly, president, the Northrop Grumman Foundation and vice president of global corporate responsibility, Northrop Grumman. “eMentors are provided with the training, content and resources needed to create a successful and rewarding mentoring experience.”

The TryEngineering Together program offers a series of units on current standards-aligned STEM topics such as flight, engineering careers and wind energy. The curriculum includes career profiles of Northrop Grumman employees, articles from Cricket Media’s STEM magazines and hands-on engineering activities designed by IEEE.

eMentors will serve as the students' learning partners. Once the teacher selects a unit, the students are then empowered to pick an article from the online library to read in tandem with their eMentors. This article serves as an introduction to and jumping off point for students' explorations of the STEM topic at hand and is then supplemented in the classroom with further discussions and related hands-on activities. Throughout the unit, students and eMentors exchange letters discussing what they are learning, posing and answering questions, and seeking advice about how to integrate the designs they put together for their hands-on activities. In addition, eMentors are encouraged to share information about their lives, their educational backgrounds and careers, as well as how they developed their passion for STEM.

"The most rewarding part of being an eMentor is the relationship that develops over the course of the academic year," believes Laura Woodside, Vice President Education Products at Cricket Media. "The eMentors expand students' worlds beyond their neighborhoods, motivate students to understand and realize their own potential and give them an invaluable real-life connection in a STEM profession."

About Cricket Media

Cricket Media® is a global education company creating high-quality print and multi-media products for children, families, mentors, teachers, and partners that improve learning opportunities for everyone. Led by our 10 award-winning children's magazines and our customizable research-tested collaborative learning platform, we are committed to creating and supporting innovative learning experiences that help children safely explore and engage with their expanding world.

About Northrop Grumman Foundation

Northrop Grumman and the Northrop Grumman Foundation are dedicated to expanding and enhancing sustainable science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education opportunities for students globally. In 2018, the organizations contributed nearly \$20 million to diverse, STEM-focused organizations and programs. Our partnerships focus on engineering and technology-based initiatives that excite, engage and educate students and provide professional development opportunities for their teachers, with an emphasis on middle school and university level programs. Defending cyber networks, engineering autonomous vehicles and exploring space are some of the capabilities students develop as they experience the excitement of STEM through programs supported by Northrop Grumman and the Northrop Grumman Foundation. Initiatives such as the Northrop Grumman Foundation Teachers Academy provide professional development opportunities for STEM teachers, who inspire students to pursue STEM careers.

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