

Bean City Bots

Over the past few years there has been a marked increase nationally in the attention to STEM Education (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). After speaking with business leaders in our community, it was clear that they had experienced first-hand the difficulty in finding skilled workers for their companies. In response to this challenge, the Chamber of Commerce, Allen Economic Development Group, the Lima Family YMCA and The Ohio State University of Lima worked with a small group of high level community leaders to develop a strategic plan/approach for STEM education in our county.

STEM Education creates critical thinkers, increases science literacy and develops the next generation of innovators. It is imperative that as a nation and local community, that we make STEM Education a top priority. Consider this:

*U.S. student achievement in mathematics and science is lagging behind students in much of Asia and Europe. International test scores tell us that in science U.S. eighth-graders were outperformed by eighth-grade students in Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong SAR, Estonia, Japan, Hungary and Netherlands.

*In math, U.S. eighth-graders were outperformed by their peers in 14 countries: Singapore, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong SAR, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Belgium, Netherlands, Estonia, Hungary, Malaysia, Latvia, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic and Australia.

*The 2012 ACT College and Career Readiness report found only 29% of the tested 2010 graduates are considered college-ready in science and 43% are considered college-ready in math.

Five years ago our YMCA became the first Y in the state of Ohio to implement a high school Robotics program. They were one of only 9 Y's nationally to do so. Since then, they have implemented both a middle school and elementary school Robotics program. They are affiliated with FIRST Robotics, a 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit public charity founded in 1989 in Manchester, NH. FIRST is an international program based in Manchester, NH and is a not-for-profit public charity which designs accessible, innovative programs that motivate young people to pursue education and career opportunities in science, technology, engineering and math, while building self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills.

In an effort to continue the growth and development of the Lima area's involvement in this program, the Lima Family YMCA is seeking the support of parents with children who may benefit from this program. There is a strong need for a parent committee who can help the team in numerous ways. There is a need for parents to help with meals on nights where the team will build late, with hotel and travel accommodations for the competition, spreading publicity about the program, seeking materials and monetary donations and working with schools to recruit the students who will benefit most from this program.

Members of the parent committee can expect to meet as a group 3-4 times per year for no more than one hour and to assist with dividing up the needs of the team and helping complete designated tasks if able. Any individual interested in working with Katie Mefferd, the Teen Leadership Development Director at the Lima Family YMCA, can contact her at 419-223-6045 ext. 116 or mefferd@limaymca.net.