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Spinal Employees Inspire Students Toward STEM Careers



Spinal Senior Engineering Manager **Lindsey Waugh** and Principal Research and Development Engineer **Jerald Redmond** recently participated as guest speakers in East High School's science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) Virtual Academy.

Students at East High School in Memphis who enroll in the STEM Virtual Academy complete online coursework while attending their regular high school classes. Each student picks classes

related to either engineering/biotechnology, civil engineering, manufacturing engineering or electrical engineering. To complement their online work, they also attend hands-on labs at East High School.

When Waugh and Redmond made their presentation, they discussed the field of Biomedical Engineering and drew upon examples in the spine industry.

"This presentation was designed to help them understand more about the biotech track," Waugh says. "It is meaningful to me to be able to inspire these students to pursue a career in engineering. When I chose engineering as a major I was unsure of what opportunities existed and what an engineer actually does. These students have a head start by being exposed to engineering in high school. They were full of questions and soaking up the information we presented, which was both fun and rewarding."

Redmond agrees. "Being in a position to cultivate and grow a student's interest in math and science is a rewarding experience. Engineering is a challenging curriculum that requires strong interest and motivation to stick with it."

"Getting students excited about the possibilities of careers in engineering is a key element in establishing the interest to choose engineering as a degree and the motivation to stick with it. The instructors at the STEM Virtual Academy have developed a great program that provides students exposure to a variety of engineering disciplines, and the students appear motivated and eager to learn."





Waugh and Redmond were asked to participate in the program because they are part of the West Tennessee STEM Hub Speakers Bureau. The Speakers Bureau exists to connect STEM professionals to classrooms in the West TN region with the purpose of educating students about STEM topics and careers, according to Senior Director of Continuous Improvement **Sharon Rozzi**, who is also a member of the Speakers Bureau and a Steering Committee Member of West Tennessee STEM Hub, which sponsors the Speakers Bureau.

“Members of the West TN STEM Hub Speakers Bureau make themselves available to visit schools and facilitate talks on their areas of expertise,” Rozzi says. “West TN regional teachers often refer to the Speakers Bureau database to enhance their STEM related curriculum like Lindsey and Jerald did at East High School. This type of interaction with students is so valuable to cultivating the next generation of engineers and possibly Medtronic Spinal employees.”

If you want to know more about the West Tennessee STEM Hub Speakers Bureau or are interested in joining, click [here](#).

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