Visit booth 661 at the USA Science & Engineering Festival, where students, parents, and teachers (and engineers, too) come together to discuss engineering careers, and have fun. IEEE-USA—a media partner of the event—offers fun and informative experiences to those who stop by. At the last event, for example, IEEE-USA ran an activity in which kids learned how to wire various switches and light bulbs, including LEDs. They also received coding lessons with help from the IEEE Computer Society. Many parents return with their kids, some of whom ask to see the “electric people,” also known as IEEE volunteers.

And we, the “electric people,” shed our company’s ID badges, leave behind our laptops, put on our most comfortable shoes and our IEEE-USA branded “red” T-shirts, and show up to staff the booth. IEEE-USA presidents also attend, using the booth as a pulpit to promote the organization’s commitment to STEM education. With so much enthusiasm from attendees, the festival has served as a wakeup call to the organization, recognizing the demand for STEM education must be supported outside of the two-day event as well.

The activities are the result of IEEE-USA’s K-12 STEM Literacy Committee’s tireless work as well as IEEE-USA’s and IEEE’s overall commitment to STEM. Other efforts in this area include getting involved in science fairs and projects at local libraries. IEEE leaders understand the importance of promoting STEM education, and engineering in particular. The best advocates, after all, are engineers.

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