

## STEM-tastic SATURDAY INSPIRES & AMAZES ALL AGES

**LARCHMONT, N.Y.** – Thousands of children and adults were amazed and inspired by the second annual "STEM-tastic Saturday" festival last Saturday (May 16th) in Larchmont. Unlike a science fair, this event more-resembled an Expo, with a NASA astronaut keynote speaker and bountiful hands-on exhibits and interactive experiences. Westchester County's STEM-tastic Saturday was the brainchild of the all-volunteer STEM Alliance with advising from the national Science Festival Alliance. Community members of all ages and backgrounds came to explore and learn across a wide range of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) disciplines.



Science festivals, rapidly gaining momentum across the country, provide a rare opportunity for everyone from recognized professionals to passionately precocious elementary students to share a love of STEM (plus Art to equal "STEAM"), and have fun in the process. "These festivals inspire youth to seek careers in these cutting-edge fields where our economy is growing and innovators are needed," said STEM Alliance President Margaret Käufer.

Participants launched rockets, witnessed drone demos, peered through

microscopes, and created circuits with motors. They made glass from sand and a few even test-drove a hovercraft built from "bouncy castle" motors by a local fifth grader. Here, toothbrush heads became enticing motorized toys, KEVA plank block towers stretched out of reach, and engineers explained the new Tappan Zee Bridge construction project.

At long tables, kids took apart small appliances and electronics to figure out how they work. Elsewhere, paper trays of axles and screws became race cars, zooming down undulating room-size tracks. The Intrepid Museum demonstrated the effect of a vacuum on different materials, and Mad Science experts helped attendees grow their own crystals. Mamaroneck Avenue School's Community Garden volunteers gave a sample of locally-



grown vegetables and encouraged planting seeds. Professionals ranging from firefighters to physical therapists to mathematicians were everywhere, and all brought something to share and to ponder.

Even NASA Astronaut Captain Kathleen Hire, specialist on two space missions, took notice, commenting on the importance of knowing soldering skills in space as participants learned the basics at a hands-on workshop. Captain Hire, explained what it's like to be in space, and what it takes to get there. She talked about the crucial importance of learning a myriad of skills, "putting all the needed tools in your toolbox," to create and make the most of opportunity.

With this year's STEM-tastic Saturday just concluded, planning is already underway for STEM-tastic 2016. The STEM Alliance of Larchmont-Mamaroneck welcomes engagement from all community members. Visit [www.lmstemalliance.org](http://www.lmstemalliance.org) or contact [info@lmstemalliance.org](mailto:info@lmstemalliance.org) to join the planning and see post-event videos as well as information about future programming.

