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Great Lakes Science Center awarded Cleveland Foundation grant for cutting edge emerging technologies program

CLEVELAND (August 21, 2019) – As Northeast Ohio grows its national role in emerging technologies such as blockchain, Industrial Internet of Things and cybersecurity, Great Lakes Science Center has stepped forward as a catalytic education leader to ensure Cleveland youth are empowered to work in and create the jobs of the region's future.

Creating Connections: Securing Cleveland's Digital Future is a multi-year initiative that innovates programs and exhibits to integrate design, coding, Industrial Internet of Things, and innovations through blockchain-based technologies. The Science Center was awarded a generous \$190,673 grant from the Cleveland Foundation to help bring this cutting edge science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education program to life.

“The Science Center is a STEM education leader whose programs bridge the gap between workforce leaders, public interest and the needs of our local school districts,” said Kirsten Ellenbogen, President & CEO. “*Creating Connections* leverages the Science Center’s unique position in the community to bring together Cleveland’s youth and emerging technologies that will play a critical role in the future of Northeast Ohio.”

The core of *Creating Connections* is a 10-hour program that introduces eighth grade Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) students to the worlds of blockchain-based technology, Industrial Internet of Things and cybersecurity. The program’s pilot run will launch in 35 CMSD schools this fall, serving as many as 60 eighth graders per school. After the pilot, the plan is to expand to reach all eighth graders in the district, with additional after-school programming that will build upon the Science Center’s existing programs in neighborhood recreation centers and regional libraries.

Creating Connections brings together Cleveland’s IoT Collaborative, Team NEO, members of BlockLand, and CMSD’s science education team, with additional support from other emerging technology partners. This work follows the success of the Science Center’s *Cleveland Creates* program for sixth and seventh grade students in CMSD. “We have a successful history of programming that teaches and empowers Cleveland youth to engineer and iterate their own designs with difficult STEM concepts,” explained Vice President of STEM Learning Scott Vollmer, “So we are excited to tackle this new challenge with our partners in the community.”

The Science Center's partnership with CMSD has deepened over the last five years, growing to include additional programming for the families of students and teachers, and hitting a milestone of 100% participation from all CMSD 7th grade classrooms for the past three years.

Great Lakes Science Center has a history of education leadership in emerging technologies. Ten years ago, the Science Center became the first museum in the nation to have a digital fabrication lab, which includes easy-to-use design and production tools like laser-powered cutting machines and three-dimensional printers. In 2017, the Science Center launched a mobile app that uses augmented and virtual reality to allow guests to interact with the otherwise inaccessible historic artifacts in their NASA Glenn Visitor Center, including experimenting with flames in space and testing spacecraft designs re-entering Earth's atmosphere. Last year, when the organization began accepting bitcoin for admission payment, it was hailed internationally as the first major museum in the U.S. to embrace cryptocurrency.

(Editor's note: The Science Center has returned to its seven-day-a-week summer operating hours. The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays.)

About Great Lakes Science Center

Great Lakes Science Center, home of the NASA Glenn Visitor Center, makes science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) come alive for more than 300,000 visitors a year through hundreds of hands-on exhibits, temporary exhibitions, the Cleveland Clinic DOME Theater, Steamship *William G. Mather*, daily science demonstrations, seasonal camps, and more. The Science Center is funded in part by the citizens of Cuyahoga County through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture. Visit **GreatScience.com** for more information.

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