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Press Release

East Bay Businesses Promote Early STEM Learning

Oakland, CA August 18, 2016: East Bay businesses depending on researchers, engineers, software designers, health providers, programmers, robot operators and employees with strong STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) skills know that it's never too early to learn about STEM.

The East Bay Economic Development Alliance, (East Bay EDA) was joined by eleven of its members and partners at Children's Fairyland (www.fairyland.org) in Oakland to introduce STEM to pre-kindergarten children. All organizations at the "MATH & SCIENCE FAIRyland" event were engaged in interactive games and activities designed to introduce STEM to very young children and encourage their continued interest. Information on teaching tips, experiments and activities for parents and caregivers to promote early STEM education at home was also provided.

Participating organizations included: Aduro Biotech, Alameda County's Information & Technology Department, Bayer, Community Resources for Science, East Bay Regional Park District, First 5 Alameda County, Peralta Community College District, Port of Oakland, The Clorox Company, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland and the YMCA of the East Bay. Support from Children's Fairyland and other sponsors of the event enabled children from diverse communities served by local nonprofits to attend the event.

Children saw skulls and animal skins at the East Bay Regional Park District's Mobile Visitor Center. They did experiments with homemade Play-Doh at Aduro Biotech's table. They got excited working with light and sound circuits with the Alameda County ITD staff, and they were mesmerized with a colorful paper chromatography experiment at the Bayer table. The children were rewarded with sunglasses, bubbles, rulers, pencils and other fun giveaways.

The event was part of East Bay EDA's "Employer-Led Engagement" initiative for workforce development. In addition to funding school-based STEM programs and providing internships, businesses are using their leadership and resources to promote the importance of STEM education and the well-paying jobs it can lead to. Each spring, a number of local businesses also participate in STEM Career Awareness Days, where companies open their doors for site visits from high school students who learn that STEM skills are used in many different kinds of companies

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and jobs. The students also have a chance to talk to STEM employees and learn what they studied in high school and college, how they developed their careers and how much they earn.

“It’s never really too early to introduce STEM to children. The earlier they are introduced – the more it becomes a natural and valued part of their learning,” said Darien Louie, Executive Director of East Bay EDA. “Our businesses are sending a message that we have to develop a local workforce with strong STEM skills to fill our jobs, and STEM learning needs to start as early as possible.”

About the East Bay EDA

The East Bay Economic Development Alliance (East Bay EDA) is a public-private partnership founded in 1990 to serve the Bay Area’s East Bay region (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties) through business attraction, retention and growth strategies. The East Bay EDA’s mission is to be the regional voice and networking resource for strengthening the economy, building the workforce and enhancing the quality of life in the East Bay.

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