Too many jobs; too few skilled workers.

STEM Smart+ is changing the equation.

An initiative of Gulf Coast Community Foundation.
Gulf Coast is investing millions through our STEMsmart initiative to address this challenge in our region, and it is working.

— Gulf Coast Community Foundation President and CEO Teri A Hansen

Building a Talent Pipeline

It’s no secret that our community needs to retain educated youth and provide a competitive workforce for growing industries. STEMsmart provides a new channel for business to tune into the school system and have a direct impact.

Technology isn’t just the language of tomorrow; it’s been the language of the last 20 years. If we want a workforce that is prepared for business, we need to equip students, teachers, and schools with the tools of the trade. Today, those tools include science, technology, engineering, and math, or STEM. We also must make a real-world connection between the needs of business and the skills and style of thinking that students command when they enter the workforce.

STEM is a national movement, and, thankfully, it’s gaining momentum. Government and the private sector alike recognize that America ranks near the bottom among 40 major economies for its pace of innovation, according to the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation. Meanwhile, our country has fallen behind more than a dozen other countries in science and math aptitude as measured at the eighth-grade level. That poor achievement ripples through the nation’s colleges, where only 14 percent of degrees are granted to students studying STEM fields.

The alarming disconnect is that the 10 fastest-growing professions, and 19 of the top 30, require significant scientific or mathematical training. As they say on Sesame Street, “One of these things is not like the other!”

“This isn’t just an education issue; it’s an economic development and quality-of-life issue,” explains Gulf Coast Community Foundation President and CEO Teri A Hansen. “We are partnering with businesses, schools, teachers, students, donors and strategic technology partners to change this equation. Gulf Coast is investing millions through our STEMsmart initiative to address this challenge in our region, and it is working.”

STEMsmart results so far include improved test scores in the bellwether subject of algebra, installation of 50 new high-tech science and math classrooms in Sarasota County middle schools, groundbreaking technology and training partnerships with global tech company Texas Instruments, and reams of accolades for local students in regional and statewide competitions.
WHAT IS STEMsmart?

STEMsmart is a huge initiative to jump-start teaching and student achievement while connecting education with real careers. Kids instantly get it. Finally, their classroom is smarter than their phone. They know it's about giving them the relevant skills to actually have a future.

Teachers are thrilled to have the training to teach differently with “first in the nation” technology—not old tools, but the best tools available.

- 8,000 Kids using Texas Instruments handheld computers in class every day.
- 150 Teachers trained in STEM techniques.
- $2.2 MILLION Gulf Coast Community Foundation’s investment so far in the five-year STEMsmart initiative. “We invest in long-term systemic change,” said Teri A Hansen, President/CEO.
- 92 Number of $25,000 donors needed to fund additional classrooms.
- 8,000 Kids using Texas Instruments handheld computers in class every day.
- 50 STEMsmart Classrooms of Tomorrow, with 7,000 students using them daily.
- 15 PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS
- 800 Kids and parents came to meet science and math TV co-hosts of Discovery Channel’s MythBusters show. Learn about events at STEMsmart.org.
- 75 Business Partners committed to providing internships, school presentations, and mentoring. Businesses recognize a very real opportunity to help shape students into the innovative employees they need to remain competitive.
- “STEM jobs advertised online are up by nearly 14 percent from last year, providing tens of thousands of job opportunities for Florida families.”

Gov. Rick Scott (December 2012)
How Do Businesses Participate?

They Jump in Where They Fit. Flexibility is good in an evolving initiative, and already dozens of STEMrart Business Partners are making presentations at schools, mentoring, offering internships for students, and hosting externships for teachers. Employers are the check and balance that keep this learning relevant. STEMrart businesses scout young talent and encourage students to pursue fields that will make them more marketable when they graduate. Everybody wins!

Call Gulf Coast Community Foundation at 941.486.4600 or visit STEMrart.org to find a way for your business to participate.

Our Business Partners

“Talent is the key economic driver.”
Mark Huey, Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County, in Biz(941) (November 2012)

“I would encourage other business persons to participate in the STEMrart initiative. Learning can sometimes feel abstract — STEMrart partners provide relevance.”
Elaine Miller, President of Suncoast Architect, Inc.

“Because our local economy is centered around tourism and service industries, technology students tend to pursue careers elsewhere. Our intent is to inform them that opportunities do exist in this area, and we encourage them to bring their skills back to the local community.” - James R. Clinch, P.E., Stormwater Engineer, City of Venice

STEMrart Innovation Award

The STEMrart Innovation Award was created to bolster and celebrate the ingenuity of the Gulf Coast by recognizing businesses that operate in unordinary ways, think better thoughts and step up to the STEMrart plate.

This award is presented to a company, organization or individual that best embodies the spirit of STEMrart. It is for companies that confront a problem or a challenge with a high degree of confidence and then conquer it using an inquisitive train of thought that integrates at least two of the four pillars of STEMrart: science, technology, engineering and math.

This sounds complex, but recognizing a potential winner is often as simple as hearing or seeing something that is just ridiculously smart and suddenly obvious, something that makes you say, “Wow!” with a touch of awe in your voice. It’s one of those “you know it when you see it” kind of things.

➤ Nominate a business at STEMrart.org.

Gulf Coast Community Foundation goes behind the scenes with these innovators. Check out the videos at STEMrart.org/awards.

The 2013 STEMrart Innovation Award Nominees (as of January 1, 2013)

Atlantic Mold and Machining Corp.
BioLucid Technologies
CineMoves, Inc.
Counter-Balance
Glaspro, Inc. (Zap Skimboards)
Mills Gilbane
Octex, LLC
Omega3 Innovations
Rapid Pathogen Screening, Inc.
Symbiont Service Corp.
Willis A. Smith Construction, Inc.

The 2013 STEMrart Innovation Award Nominees (as of January 1, 2013)
How can we attract the workforce we need to stay competitive?

+ **Grow them right here at home.**
In 2010, Gulf Coast Community Foundation planted a multimillion-dollar seed for STEMsmart to sprout and committed to nurture it for five years. To help it grow, more than $1.8 million has been leveraged through partners like Sarasota County Schools, Charlotte County Public Schools, Texas Instruments and HP. Ultimately, STEMsmart belongs to the community and people like you who choose to engage and support it rather than to accept the status quo.

+ **Support teachers and students.**
STEMsmart has reenergized teachers and provided them with the techniques and technology to get results. Sarasota and Charlotte county schools are participating in groundbreaking partnerships with Texas Instruments and HP to offer revolutionary student experiences. Students are filling STEMsmart after-school clubs and events to capacity. Test scores are rising, and more college scholarship money is available to students pursuing STEM fields of study.

+ **Get involved.**
Whether you are an employer, parent, teacher or student, this is about you. It is how we raise the quality of teacher training and ensure that the education we provide to our kids will be relevant. It’s about fostering innovation and staying competitive globally. It’s about growing our businesses, our tax base, and our quality of life on the Gulf Coast. This is important—and it’s cool!

Together, we can do this.

Visit GulfCoastCF.org or STEMsmart.org to learn more. Much more. Or call 941.486.4600.