**STEMsmart transforms learning via a vision**

By GREG LERBERGER

**VENUE 3B**

The foundation created STEMsmart to improve student achievement in science, technology, engineering, and math, or STEM, in those subjects are commonly known in education and industry. "Research showed that many of the fastest-growing, highest-paying jobs were going to be in STEM fields," said Ted A. Hansen, president and CEO of Gulf Coast. "We needed to attract our community's students to make sure they have the best opportunities to excel in those fields."

It was about the same time that Dave Thaxton had his vision. "We took a careful look at how we were teaching and we realized that our student progress rate was not improving in both math and science," she said.

Gulf Coast partnered with the Sarasota and Charlotte school districts, and in July 2010, the Foundation announced a five-year, $2.5-million STEM project focused on eight schools in southern Sarasota and Charlotte counties.

Since then, the successful initiative has grown to include every middle school in Sarasota County and most high schools. Gulf Coast has added nearly $1 million more than its initial commitment, and many partners have donated additional funds. Plantation Community Foundation, for example, helped fund a classroom at Venice Middle School.

"With contributions from generous donors, the two school districts, and business partners, our community has invested more than $9 million, and counting, into STEMsmart," Hansen said. "The result has been.

**VENICE HIGH SCHOOL**

**PHOTO BY CURT ROLES PROVIDED BY GULF COAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

The four student teams from Venice High took first place in the multidisciplinary math challenge at the 2010 STEMsmart High School Competition in January. Todd Bowden (left) of Suncoast Technical College and Mark Pritchett (right) of Gulf Coast Community Foundation present ribbons to Lauren McCarty, Karla Prin, Teresa Kelley, and Sydney Helbring.

**VENICE HIGH SCHOOL**

**PHOTO BY CURT ROLES PROVIDED BY GULF COAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

Dennis from Plantation Community Foundation joined Gulf Coast Community Foundation's Jon Thaxton last fall to cut the ribbon on a new STEMsmart Classroom at Venice Middle School.

**OUR TOWN**

**PHOTO BY DON DALY PHOTOGRAPHY**

**LOCATION: PINELANDS TRAIL**

The next morning, there is happy talk about the party and plans for Chris and Walter to get together when something goes terribly wrong with the electricity, and Sy does while having his electrolysis treatment. With Walter at the door, Chris and Poly have to do something with the body. Chris learns that the deceased has left him $10 million but Sy's only daughter, Lenore (Cara Herman), is not impressed. With contributions from generous donors, the two school districts, and business partners, our community has invested more than $9 million, and counting, into STEMsmart," Hansen said. "The result has been.

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He is an Ambassador dog. He is the training lead for Southeast Guide Dogs. Michael was his puppy raiser and he loved raising him. Ambassador dogs make sure that puppy raisers and all who meet them bring joy and schools, bringing joy to all who meet them.

Michael was his puppy raiser who was career changed. He is an Ambassador dog with costumes by Weber, with costumes by a stranger.

Miss an ad in the newspaper? Nominate by Phone: Nominated by:

For more info: 941-207-1010

Tell Us Who Stands Out
Professional Excellence

This program has been created for our local community members to recognize individuals who are business partners, and professional excellence. Your nomination could be a business owner, or employee of a business that goes "that extra mile" in the Venice area. Nominees will be screened by a panel and the Top 40 Business Professionals will be named in Business Matters, publishing “in our Top 40 Business Professionals” section.

Deadline for nominations Friday, May 15, 2015.

REASON FOR NOMINATION

* All submissions must have a reason for the nomination.

Mail or hand delivered: 200 East Venice Ave., Venice, FL 34285
Fax: 941-408-0386
Nominate by Email: VeniceGonderTop40@gmail.com

For more info: 941-207-1010

The Collaboration Celebration also marked a partnership between students and STEMsmart. In a proclamation read by Superintendent White, the Sarasota County School Board committed to sustain and enhance the STEMsmart initiative by passing a new programming financial, logistical, instructional, curricular, operational, and administrative support in future classes and activities. A portion of the proceeds from the event will be redirected to STEMsmart Activities this year in the first year of the STEMsmart initiative by the Sarasota Bay Area, the charter middle school at the Venice High School. For more info, please visit Guidedogs.com.