

# College brings STEM Opportunities to Students

By LAUREN MCDONALD The Brunswick News

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An ever-changing world of opportunities exists in the STEM fields.

Jobs in STEM — or science, technology, engineering and mathematics — require skills like critical thinking and creativity. In Glynn County, students have many opportunities to get involved in STEM education programs. Many of those opportunities are sponsored by the College of Coastal Georgia, where faculty prioritize finding ways to give back to the community and get involved in the education of local students.

This past weekend, the college hosted its annual Math & Sciences Bowl Competition for high school and middle school students. The event, sponsored in collaboration with Pinova, is put together by the math and science departments at the college, with help from faculty in other departments as well. Students from local schools participated in the competition.

“First, all of them have a written exam,” said Courtenay Miller, assistant professor of mathematics at Coastal Georgia and one of the event’s organizers. “And then they do bowl rounds, and the bowl questions are math and science questions that correspond to the standards.”

The event is a friendly competition for students, Miller said. It also engages them in exciting and fun STEM education.

“It keeps us connected with the school system, and it keeps the high school students and the middle schools students interested in STEM fields,” Miller said. “And we want to recruit more to STEM fields.”



The college also hosted its annual “Expanding Your Horizons” event in November. The event is targeted toward middle school-aged girls and gave students the chance to engage in hands-on STEM activities with college faculty.

Miller, and many other faculty members at the college, offer service-learning opportunities throughout the year in their classes, through which college students partner with local community groups. Many of these projects involve STEM education, Miller said.

A group of college students partnered with Marshes of Glynn Libraries this summer to help with several STEM- related events for participants in the summer reading program.

Miller also directs a local STEM education improvement plan grant through which the college pairs faculty members with middle school teachers to offer STEM education in creative ways.

“They collaborate and come up with these cool lessons ... and they actually present the lessons so that it gets middle school students interested in STEM fields,” Miller said.

STEM education can inspire students to follow career opportunities in an exciting and lucrative field. STEM jobs are some of the highest paying, Miller said.

“As parents, we want to train up our children to be great and to be independent thinkers, so this participation in STEM activities equips the students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers and go about trying to understand the world,” she said.