

CAMDEN – Music boomed through the basketball courts at the former Boys & Girls Club of Parkside on Friday morning as city students focused not on dancing or sports but on things more exciting: science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

About 200 students from across Camden – the City School District and charter and renaissance schools – showed off their STEM projects in the first citywide STEM Showcase, hosted by the Camden Education Fund and sponsored by the American Water Charitable Foundation.

From rat genetics to robots that navigate water in the swimming pool to demonstrations of how lemons can generate electricity – all were offered in the name of science education by teachers and students from 20 schools.

"Early exposure to STEM education can help close the diversity gap in the field and students' career trajectories, and we hope Camden's first citywide STEM Showcase can be a part of that," said Camden Education Fund CEO Giana Campbell.

Campbell told TAPinto Camden that the idea started from a parking lot conversation last summer when she and the CEF team wanted to do an event for all schools that would help celebrate the STEM learning happening across the city and encourage children to consider science and technology careers.

Although the CEF did not want to make the first year's event competitive, expect the second annual STEM Showcase to pit schools against each other vying for cash prizes, Campbell said.

The gym was high energy from the beginning, with students from as young as preschoolers to high school seniors. Pushing the excitement level even higher was special guest **Grand Hank** (Tyraine Ragsdale), who is billed as a "master scientist" and television personality.

Grand Hank, whose television show "Science Lab of **Grand Hank**" is produced with the School District of Philadelphia, conducts school assemblies, mixing hip-hop music with STEM lessons.

"Today, we are one Camden," CEF CEO Campbell told the educators and students in her opening remarks. One of the nonprofit CEF's missions is to unite all, whether they are from the City School District, charters, or renaissance schools.

Katrina T. McCombs, the city district superintendent, spoke briefly to the group and the former Camden High School cheerleader led the students in a STEM cheer.

American Water Charitable Foundation was an event sponsor and led a demonstration to educate students about how clean drinking water is made.

"We recognize the importance of introducing STEM to children at an early age, and we are proud to support this event through the Foundation's One Water Street Grant Program. We hope that this event will inspire more Camden students to develop an interest in STEM as they grow," Carrie Williams, president of the American Water Charitable Foundation, said in a statement.

CITATION (AGLC STYLE)

NEILL BOROWSKI, 'Give Me An S, T, E, M! Camden Students' Science, Technology Projects Cheered On at STEM Showcase', *TAPinto.net* (online), 21 Mar 2025 <<https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/19F777A61FAC3338>>