

## DREAM STEM

# NEWSLETTER

### WHO WE ARE

The National Science Foundation granted an award to the College of the Florida Keys to create a program entitled “Developing Reliable Educational Avenues to Manifest (DREAM) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Careers”. The project aims to develop unique and exciting STEM career pathways that will remove barriers to entrance, reduce anxiety, and reward success as students transition from STEM academia to the STEM workforce.



Figure 1. CFK Coding Summer Camp students utilizing Virtual Reality headsets to participate in a Virtual Spacewalk.

### DREAM STEM FORUM – CFK SUMMER CAMPS 2024 (39 STUDENT TOTAL)

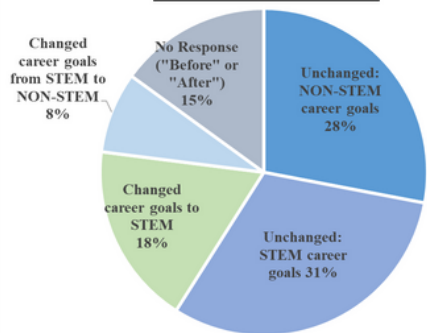


Figure 2. Results from the CFK 2024 Summer Camps STEM Forum. Special Note - 18% changed their career goal to STEM

### STEM AMBASSADOR OUTREACH

The DREAM STEM program offers: (1) scholarship opportunities for STEM oriented college students, and (2) support for dual enrollment high school students. Scholarship recipients are called STEM Ambassadors. During outreach efforts at local 3rd grade through high school, the STEM Ambassadors act as mentors and share their stories of how they overcame challenges while pursuing their STEM academic careers. Recently, STEM Ambassadors interacted with 39 students enrolled in various CFK Summer camps from ages 6-11 (Figure 1). After engaging with STEM VR applications, results showed that 18% changed their career goals to STEM after the outreach effort (Figure 2).



# MORE OUTREACH EVENTS



Figure 3. Student utilizing a Virtual Reality Headset for the first time at Community Day.

## COMMUNITY DAY

The College of the Florida Keys annual Community Day features student clubs, local companies, and live performances by local organizations. STEM Ambassadors had the opportunity to connect with community members and promote the program through the use of virtual reality headsets (Figure 3). Community members had the choice to experience a virtual scuba dive with sharks or observe the Earth from a spacewalk. Overall, the interactive experience sparked interest in the younger audience to consider pursuing a STEM career.

## MOTE OCEAN FEST

Dr. Patrick Rice (DREAM STEM Principal Investigator) and the STEM Team set up a recruiting booth at Mote Ocean Festival in Key West FL. The team provided Virtual Reality (VR) demonstrations of marine science VR training applications like Coral Restoration Virtual Reality (CRVR). The VR applications were developed as part of the DREAM STEM project and shared with for participants of all ages. Other interactive marine science activities included microscopes with zooplankton and marine aquaculture with clownfish.



Figure 4. STEM Ambassadors at CFK DREAM STEM Recruiting booth at MOTE Ocean Fest (Dec 3rd, 2024).



Figure 5. STEM Ambassadors at the STEM Job Fair promoting the DREAM STEM program.

## STEM CAREER FAIR

The College of the Florida Keys hosted a STEM Job Fair, which provided students with a chance to speak one-on-one with industry representatives and gain valuable information about potential internship or career opportunities. The STEM Ambassadors had a table at the event to spread awareness about the DREAM STEM program and promote internship opportunities with local employers (Figure 5).



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