Lockheed Martin Challenges Pennsauken Middle School Students During National Engineers Week

To commemorate National Engineers Week, Lockheed Martinengineers used ping pong balls and robots to challenge middle school students to embrace the sciences and mathematics and eventual careers as engineers and scientists.

Engineers from Lockheed Martin Advanced Technology Laboratories (ATL) used rubber bands, ice cream sticks, string, paper, and ping pong balls to demonstrate basic engineering principles to nearly 60 8th grade students from Howard M. Phifer Middle School in Pennsauken, N.J.

Students used the items to transfer five balls from one bag to another in the fastest possible time without touching or dropping them. Afterward, ATL engineers demonstrated their own working robot, showing students that mathematics and science make possible the creative leap from ice cream sticks to automation.

"The idea is that moving the balls as a team requires planning, creative thinking, teamwork, problem solving, and a lot of fun--all important principles of engineering," said James Marsh, director ATL. "Hopefully, we've encouraged some of these students to select classes in high school that will help prepare them for a career in engineering or science."

The students received Engineers Week themed pencils and bookmarks to commemorate the day.

Engineers Week is the first of several community activities that Lockheed Martin sponsors throughout the year to promote the sciences and engineering. Space Day in May features space-related activities, including a rocket launch, and the Annual Robotics Workshop in November teaches basic computer programming skills and robotics.

Founded in 1951, National Engineers Week is supported by a formal coalition of engineering, education, and professional societies as well as corporations and government agencies. It is dedicated to raising public awareness of engineers' positive contributions to our quality of life. Lockheed Martin is a corporate sponsor of National Engineers Week.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 146,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2008 sales of $42.7 billion.

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