



For immediate release

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Elementary School Students Presented Tiger Rescue Devices and Extreme Weather Shoes Designed Using Applied Learning

First and third grade students in hands-on Project Lead The Way courses presented animal inspired projects to Zoo New England staff and STEM industry professionals

[Boston, MA, May 23, 2019] Congratulations to student teams from Eliot K-8 Innovation School in Boston, Martin E. Young Elementary School in Randolph, and Conservatory Lab Charter School for being selected as winners for their animal inspired STEM projects at the Launch Showcase, organized by [Mass STEM Hub](#), a program of the One8 Foundation. This showcase was held for [Project Lead The Way](#) (PLTW) Launch students on Thursday May 23, 2019 in partnership with Zoo New England at Franklin Park Zoo.

Mass STEM Hub's Launch Showcase featured projects by 90 elementary school students in *Animal Adaptations* and *Stability & Motion* courses across Massachusetts, part of PLTW's Launch curriculum. PLTW's Launch curriculum enables elementary school students to practice design thinking through engaging hands on activities and projects to solve real world problems.

At the showcase, elementary school students presented prototypes of devices they designed to rescue a trapped zoo tiger using what they learned about simple machines and interactive forces in their *Stability & Motion* PLTW course. Students also showcased prototypes of shoes designed for travelers in extreme climates and environments to help keep travelers safe using what they learned about animal adaptations to different world environments in the *Animal Adaptations* PLTW course.

"We could not be more thrilled to partner with Mass STEM Hub on this exciting initiative that is inspiring young students to use their critical thinking and STEM skills in such an engaging and memorable way. This partnership is perfectly aligned with our commitment to conservation, education and inspiring the next generation of conservation stewards and leaders. I'm incredibly impressed by the enthusiasm and creativity displayed by the students today," said **John Linehan, Zoo New England President and CEO**.

All of the students received feedback from industry judges including Zoo New England staff and professionals from organizations including National Grid, Mass DOT, PUMA, Fountain Design, and Microsoft, connecting their classwork to the work these experts do daily. The volunteer judges were impressed by the students' application of the engineering design process so early in their schooling, and excited to help inspire the next generation of STEM professionals.

“We try to make the connection in the classroom, but being able to present to zoo experts and engineers and people within the field has brought it to another level,” commented **Catilin Hutto, STEM teacher at Eliot K-8 Innovation School**. “I love the feedback that’s been given. The students have already have said ‘next time we do this I may think about adding a lever,’ or ‘I may think about securing this part of my shoe better.’”

Judges voted on student projects selecting winners based on conceptual understanding, presentation, innovation, and creativity. Winning students were awarded with passes to Zoo New England as well as Rocketbooks.

The Showcase Winner Award was awarded to a group from Eliot K-8 Innovation School for their tiger rescue project. This team was chosen as the overall best solution to the real-life problem at hand, considering understanding of the engineering design process, presentation, innovation, and creativity.

Two teams tied to win the Unique Shoe Innovation Award. Students from Martin E. Young Elementary School designed a shoe inspired by polar bears to keep feet warm in arctic climates. Students from Conservatory Lab Charter School created a shoe designed to protect travelers in the Amazon Rainforest.

Lastly, the Tiger Rescue Innovation Award, awarded to the team with the most innovative tiger rescue project, was awarded to a team from Eliot K-8 Innovation School. The device this team presented involved wheels and axels as well as pulleys to save a tiger.

Mass STEM Hub partnered with Zoo New England to create this opportunity for students to showcase their projects to industry professionals based on the organizations’ common commitment to providing hands-on, STEM-focused educational experiences for students in the Commonwealth.

“Children decide at a very young age whether or not math and science are for them, so being able to connect what is being taught in school outside of the classroom is key,” commented **Andreina Parisi-Amon, Director of Partnerships for Mass STEM Hub**. “When students discuss their work with professionals, they find the confidence and excitement to continue exploring and discovering.”

National Grid is a founding event sponsor of Mass STEM Hub.

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Mass STEM Hub is a program of the One8 Foundation and its mission is to provide schools with access to and support for the next level of STEM education that engages students and prepares them to succeed in a rapidly changing, high tech world. Mass STEM Hub has helped scale Project Lead The Way’s K-12 curriculum in engineering, computer science and biomedical science to over 35,000 students in Massachusetts, enabling students to learn how to take theory to practice with real world problem solving. www.mass-stemhub.org

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If you would like more information about this topic, please email akisiel@one8.org

Photos from this event can be found [here](#).