

Tallahassee Science Festival promotes youth education, involvement

Alex Burnham, Staff Writer 11:48 a.m. EDT September 11, 2016



(Photo: Neil Coker/Democrat)

This Saturday, on the central green of Lake Ella Park, crowds of eager students and their supporting families gathered for the 5th Annual Tallahassee Science Festival. Next to the historic row of cottages at Lake Ella, the scientific community in Tallahassee and across the state came out to provide hands-on learning experiences for kids and educational resources for parents.

Over the course of the festival, more than 4,000 kids led their parents through a field of educational booths and tents, each stop offering a unique avenue for scientific understanding, free giveaways, and helpful tips for getting involved with the scientific community.

Representatives from Florida State University, Florida A&M University, Tallahassee Community College, the National Magnetic Lab and more featured tents with activities or exhibits driven by problem-solving and creative thinking.

“When you see the words ‘condensed matter system’ it may seem a little scary at first, if you are new to the subject,” said Megan Hoadley, a representative from the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory. “But when you offer the kids here hands-on examples, like ones made of pretzels and marshmallows, the subject becomes much less intimidating, more approachable—it’s a great way to learn.”

Across from the ‘Mag Lab’ tent, members and leaders of Dance Marathon at Florida State University were constantly in and out of their tent station, giving away free t-shirts to people throughout the park in support of the Children’s Miracle Network.

The philanthropy-based foundation convened at the fifth annual science festival to help meet their fundraising goal (last year, DM raised \$1,435, 120.32 For the Kids), in order to provide medical care, treatment and research to the local Children’s Miracle Network Hospital and the FSU College of Medicine.

As well as spreading awareness for current endeavors in science and technology, the 5th Annual Tallahassee Science Festival encouraged the local youth to engage in a broad spectrum of learning in order to enhance the community’s future. The event put a heavy focus on S.T.E.A.M – Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics – and emphasized the importance of each subject in students’ educational pursuits.

“These kids are the future, which is the very attitude of an event like this today,” said candidate for the Leon County Supervisor of Elections Mark Earley.

Earley and the current Supervisor of Elections Ion Sancho (who fittingly sported a t-shirt with an ion on it) were both present at the event, encouraging both scientific and political involvement throughout the community.

“I’m an engineer, not a politician,” said Earley, who earned his degree from the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering. “The role of technology in the voting process is bigger than it ever has been—elections run on new and improving systems, and our goal is to be at the forefront of those advances and improvements.”

From political awareness to environmental conservation, medical information to sewing stations, the 5th Annual Tallahassee Science Festival maintained its reputation once again this year as one the city’s most diverse, interactive, and effective educational outlets.

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