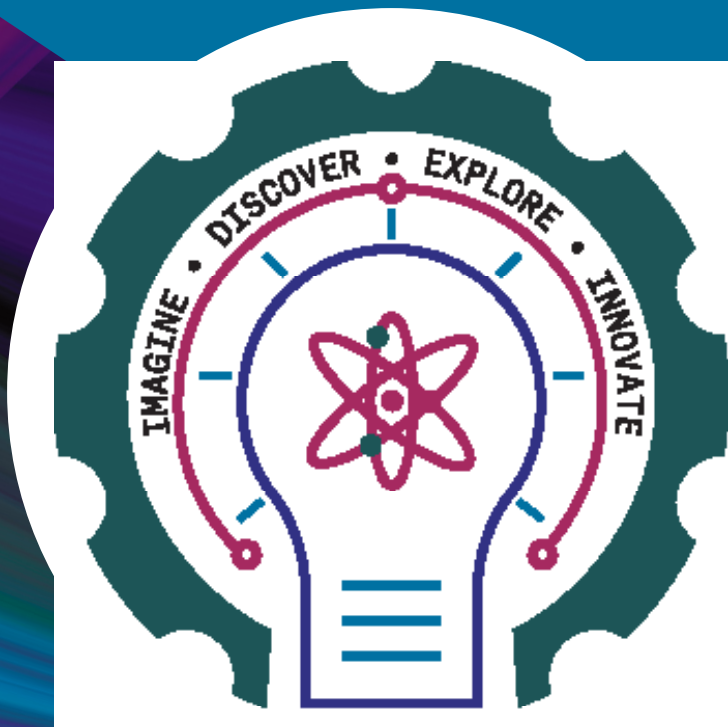




WICKEDSTEM

Northern New England STEM Expo

**TEACHING
TOMORROW'S
BIOENGINEERS**
WITH CHRISTY JOHNSON

**TISSUE
THERAPEUTICS**
WITH JAY HOYING, PH.D

PHIL MAGNUSZEWSKI
TALKS AI

JANICE MOSER, PH.D,
IS GROWING BLOOD IN A LAB



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2026 Expo Speaker: Christy Johnson, Director of Education and Workforce Development, ARMI

TOPIC: JOIN THE FUTURE IN BIOMANUFACTURING: EDUCATION AND CAREER PATHWAYS

Teaching tomorrow's bioengineers, one student project at a time

By Kathleen D. Bailey
Special to the Union Leader

Christy Johnson, director of education and workforce development for ARMI, says there's

no upper limit for educating people in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).



Christy Johnson

"We like to say we educate from K (kindergarten) to gray (seniors)," she points out.

Johnson will be one of the speakers in this year's Wicked STEM Expo on Saturday, Sept. 19. She will speak on "Join the Future in Biomanufacturing: Education and Career Pathways."

STEM education for all

Johnson works with a team of five at ARMI — the Advanced Regenerative Manufacturing Institute.

She oversees all of ARMI's education and workforce projects, with a reach that's not just local,



Students in ARMI's BioTrek program check the results of an experiment.

PROVIDED BY ARMI

but regional and national.

They partner with other companies, she said.

"We are trying to co-develop alternate education pathways, career pathways. We want to have as many on-ramps as possible."

For Johnson and her

team, this includes partnerships with high schools, colleges, people already established in their careers — and elementary schools, beginning with kindergarten.

ARMI's flagship program is called BioTrek. It's a curriculum emphasizing

workforce-readiness projects.

"We encourage the students to work in teams, solve real-world problems, develop a model solution and pitch it to industry leaders," she said.

BioTrek teaches a number of the "soft" skills,

according to Johnson: entrepreneurial skills, teamwork skills, collaboration skills.

The students who succeed are the ones who "come with an attitude that they really want to make a difference, make an impact."

She especially likes working with the Gen Z cohort, "because they look at things with a different set of eyes."

Students have no trouble finding projects, according to Johnson. They just have to look around them. They've taken on Type 1 diabetes, solutions for broken bones, even situations involving red blood cells.

ARMI works in partnership with Breakthrough T1D (formerly the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation) to find a cure or treatment for children with Type 1.

When students start to toss around solutions with their peers, they hear personal stories, Johnson said.

"They say, 'This happened to my dad. My grandfather. My little brother. They're invested in coming up with a solution.'"

An alternate pathway

Johnson herself made a later-in-life shift. While she worked as a science teacher for more than 30 years, she felt the need for

See **Biomanufacturing**, Page 5

For complete information on the Wicked STEM 2026 event, see Page 10.



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2026 Expo Speaker: Philip Magnuszewski, Founder, AI in NH and D!srupt

TOPIC: WHAT AI CAN ACTUALLY DO: REAL TOOLS, REAL EXAMPLES, LIVE DEMONSTRATIONS

AI isn't coming for your job — but it *is* changing work

By Kathleen D. Bailey
Special to the Union Leader

Philip Magnuszewski has seen Artificial Intelligence from all sides, as a researcher, a scientist

and a user.

From the thousands of people he's talked to, he's identified one primary fear: "The average person," he said, "is afraid that AI is going to take their job."

The question is a relevant one as Americans face an age of computers doing what we never thought they could. Through his firm, D!srupt; his nonprofit, AI in NH; and his service as chair of the New Hampshire Tech Alliance's AI Task Force; Magnuszewski works with business and industry leaders to integrate the new technology with their mission and goals.

At the Wicked STEM Expo Sept. 19, Magnuszewski will speak on "What



Philip Magnuszewski



PROVIDED BY PHILIP MAGNUSZEWSKI

Philip Magnuszewski provides free community training on Microsoft AI tools: Copilot and Copilot Studio. He will be speaking at Wicked STEM 2026.

AI can actually do: Real tools, real examples, live demonstrations."

How we got here

In Magnuszewski's experience, much of the confusion about AI comes from a lack of information.

"There's not an awful lot of AI literacy out there," he said.

Magnuszewski added, "The technology has evolved incredibly fast. And it's been put out there without warning, without instructions."

"It's out there and it's powerful," he said.

Through his nonprofit, Magnuszewski does what he calls "AI literacy training." He schools employers and business leaders on "what it is and what it isn't."

What is AI? Boiled down, it's just a piece of software, "an algorithm," he said. "It's software with an intent of mimicking how the human brain works."

What is it not? "It's not something that thinks on its own," Magnusze-

wski said. "It doesn't know right from wrong. It doesn't think for itself."

According to Magnuszewski, it's easy for consumers to be caught up in the "magic" of AI, for everything from a PowerPoint presentation to garden designs.

But both consumers and business leaders have to remember, "It's just ones and zeroes on the other side."

AI will never replace the human touch, especially in areas such as phone prompts. Even Magnuszewski gets frustrated, he said.

"I was on the phone trying to find out something about my health care, and I spent five minutes in the loop," he said. "There was not one prompt to get me where I wanted to be."

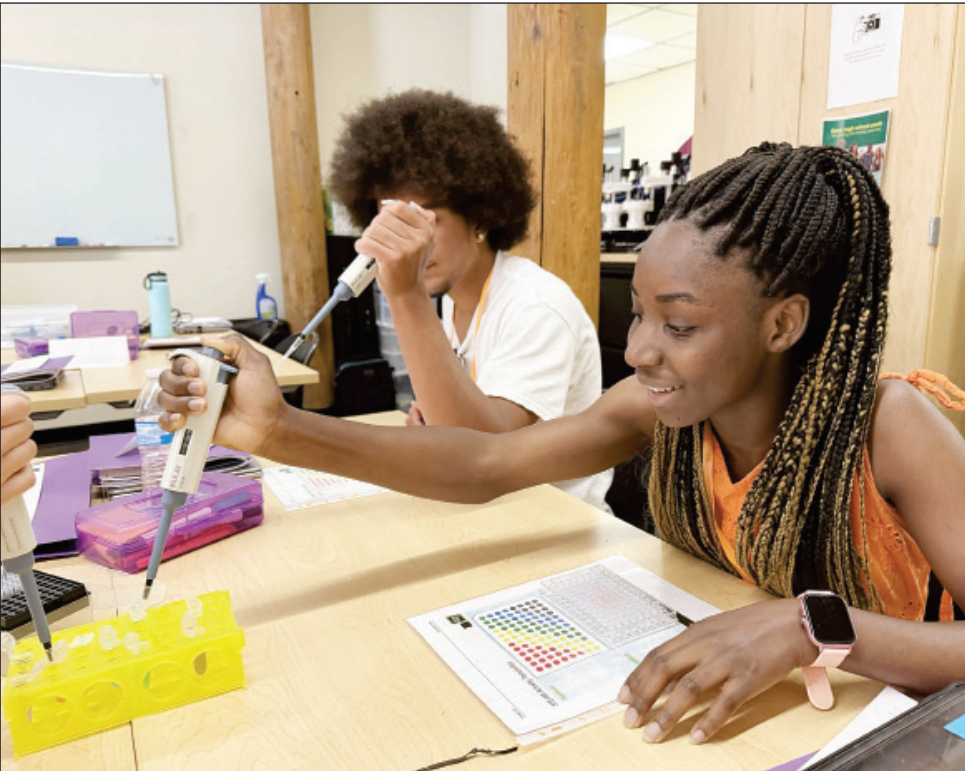
This, he observed, is an example of AI at its worst, a one-size-fits-all philosophy. "It's not being thoughtful about the service or the product," he said.

In the business world, "we need to think about

See AI, Page 5

"The technology has evolved incredibly fast. And it's been put out there without warning, without instructions. It's out there and it's powerful."

PHILIP MAGNUSZEWSKI
Founder, AI in NH and D!srupt



PROVIDED BY ARMI

Two students in ARMI's BioTrek program research a scientific topic.

Biomanufacturing

From Page 2

a change after COVID-19. But she wanted to stay connected to the STEM world, and joined ARMI in 2022. "They have a strong mission and are involved in community outreach," she said, adding, "It's a perfect match." She said she had been aware of the company for years. While she was still a classroom teacher in Windham, she printed out articles about the company and pinned them to

a bulletin board. "I would tell the students, 'This is in your backyard,'" she said of the Manchester location. While women and girls perform well in STEM jobs, their commitment still lags behind that of boys, according to Johnson. ARMI is seeking out women and girls interested in being mentored. "We want to give young women, in particular, the opportunity to break down barriers," she said.

Locally, ARMI works with organizations such as Girls Inc., Girl Scouts and Girls at Work, which introduces young women to power tools. The organization is also interested in helping minorities find a place in the STEM world. "We want to make sure we bring these opportunities to all people," Johnson said. "We go to urban schools, rural schools, public schools, private schools, charter schools."

AI

From Page 4

work in general," he said. "What things can be made possible by AI?" Could AI provide a greater level of service? Better product development? Better one-on-one marketing? These, he said, are the questions decision-makers have to ask. And, he said, AI's success depends on who is "inputting" and what is input. "You may get a different answer from ChatGPT or Claude," he said. Or the AI could pull a false piece of information. "We expect to be able to trust the output," Magnuszewski said. As in any form of communication, it helps to be as specific as possible, he added. "If the user gives the machine a vague prompt, they'll get something back that is not very good." What is AI good at? "Being able to understand and synthesize information. If given the appropriate data, AI can synthesize information between different disciplines, such as economics and health care." That, he said, is the wonder of the tech, "and not that we can do things faster." "Just because you can, doesn't mean you should," he summed up. Magnuszewski originally went to college for marketing and finance. Around 1998, he veered into the growing tech field. "It was not uncommon, back in the day," he said. He always worked with emergent technologies. He named his own firm "D'srupt" because, he said, "We are looking to 'disrupt' all the traditional ways we have of thinking about things." Magnuszewski added, "We have all these technologies coming to fruition. We have incredible opportunities to rethink the world around us." But, he added, that rethinking should be done "carefully, thoughtfully."

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2026 Expo Speaker: Janice M. Moser, CMC Lead, Safi Biotherapeutics

TOPIC: REIMAGINING THE GLOBAL BLOOD SUPPLY WITH MANUFACTURED RED BLOOD CELLS

She's growing blood in a lab — and she'll explain how

By Kathleen D. Bailey
Special to the Union Leader

Blood. It's the body's workhorse, delivering nutrients and oxygen to the cells of the body, and transporting metabolic waste products away from those same cells.

This fluid also coagulates, converting to a semisolid gel to stop bleeding. It transports hormones and regulates the core body temperature. It's essential to life. And one firm with local ties is mastering the art of creating this precious fluid in the laboratory, so that no need remains unmet.



Janice Moser

Janice Moser, Ph.D., is intimately involved in the manufacturing of blood through her company, Safi Biotherapeutics. She will speak on "Reimagining the Global Blood Supply with Manufactured Red Blood Cells" at the Wicked STEM Expo.

A long time coming

The process for manufacturing red blood cells dates back to 2000, according to Moser. A research group was tasked with creating what she



Scientists working at Safi Biotherapeutics.

PROVIDED BY JANICE MOSER

calls "novel" blood. Two of the scientists, Rob Thomas and Katie Glen, were working from Loughborough University in Britain.

The program ended but the concept was revisited in 2019 by the Defense Health Agency. Dr. Terry

Rauch formed a program to research on-demand blood.

Rauch worked through the U.S. military's medical school, and eventually linked up with Safi, Moser's company.

For the past six years,

according to Moser, the joint companies have been advancing the production of red blood cells in the laboratory.

Moser said Safi's main charge was to "scale" the production of blood cells. Earlier, they could

produce 10 milliliters at a time.

"Now the labs can produce 10 liters, or the equivalent of five soda bottles," she said, adding, "That's the equivalent of one unit of red blood cells."

From stem cells to red blood cells, it takes about 21 days, she added.

While other biotech firms have created red blood cells, Moser said, "We are the most advanced. We have developed the technology to do it efficiently and cost-effectively."

Safi has a strong partnership between the biology and engineering operations, and she acts as a liaison between the two, Moser said. "It is very important," she said, "that the two disciplines work together."

The firm is currently producing O-negative blood cells, or the universal donor type. It's the most adaptable to crisis situations. "If you have a victim brought in from a car accident, you hope you have O-negative on hand," she said. "Otherwise, you have to find out their 'type,'" and this could waste precious minutes of recovery.

For acute blood loss or other types of trauma, emergency room personnel and first responders tend to grab the O-negative.

Moser sees a time when other blood types will be created in the lab and put to use. For patients who

See **Blood**, Page 7

Blood

From Page 6

have multiple transfusions, “We could identify closely-matched units, and bank manufactured units of the other blood types,” she said. “If you need blood, you need blood, even if it’s just a partial match.”

In 2024, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration granted Safi’s mRBCs Rare Pediatric Disease Designation and Orphan Drug Designation for use in the chronic transfusion of patients with sickle cell disease.

But for now, the scientists are concentrating on the road to commercial use of the product, a road they’re following with

Manchester’s Advanced Regenerative Manufacturing Institute.

The next step in On-Demand Blood is finding an efficient way to freeze, store and ship the product. They hope to have the product ready for clinical trials by 2027, according to Moser.

There are three main clinical trials it has to pass before being commercially available.

“I’m not going to lie, it’s going to take a while,” she said.

Moser, 51, has seen many changes over her career in science. Still, she “never thought I’d see the day” when she was in-

involved in creating human blood cells from her lab.

“Working with this material still surprises and excites me when I see what we can do,” she said.

Moser never felt turned away from science because she was a woman.

“I had fabulous support growing up. It didn’t occur to me that I couldn’t do something,” she said. “Maybe I had blinders on.”

Moser divides STEM into two main fields, science and engineering. She’s seen more young women entering the science side of the disciplines, especially in

biology.

She’s also seen more women entering engineering, but not as many as in biology.

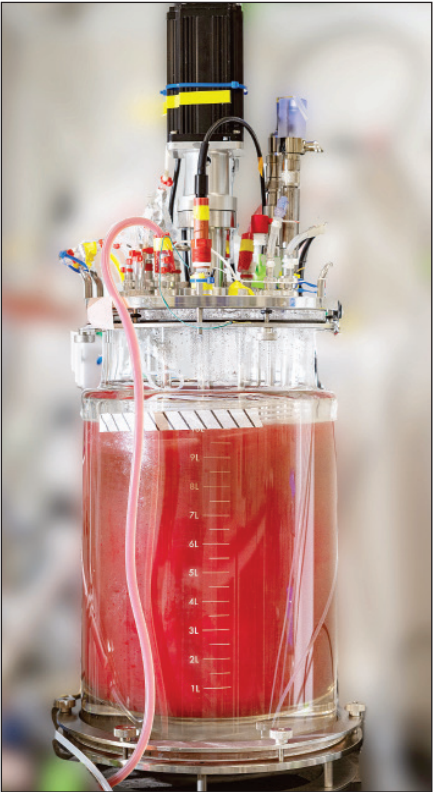
“Engineering is still under-represented,” Moser said.

She also believes women are underrepresented in the higher levels of the disciplines, such as chief scientific officers.

“We’re 50% of the population. We should be 50% of everything.”

Moser is looking forward to Wicked STEM and chatting with young people of both genders.

“I love encouragement,” she said, adding, “I’ve had many mentors.”



At Safi Biotherapeutics, Janice Moser and her team are working to manufacture red blood cells in the laboratory for use in transfusions.

PROVIDED BY JANICE MOSER

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2026 Expo Speaker: Jay Hoying, Chief Scientist, ASI Life Sciences

TOPIC: REBUILDING THE BODY: ADVANCES IN TISSUE THERAPEUTICS

Tissue Therapeutics: Exploring new frontiers in rebuilding the body

By Kathleen D. Bailey
Special to the Union Leader

Jay Hoying can't remember a time he didn't want to be a scientist. He started out watching "Nova" on PBS when he was about 8 years old. He pursued his passion through elementary, middle and high school, with one memorable moment standing out: in elementary school, his science teacher was sick and asked him to take over the class.



Jay Hoying

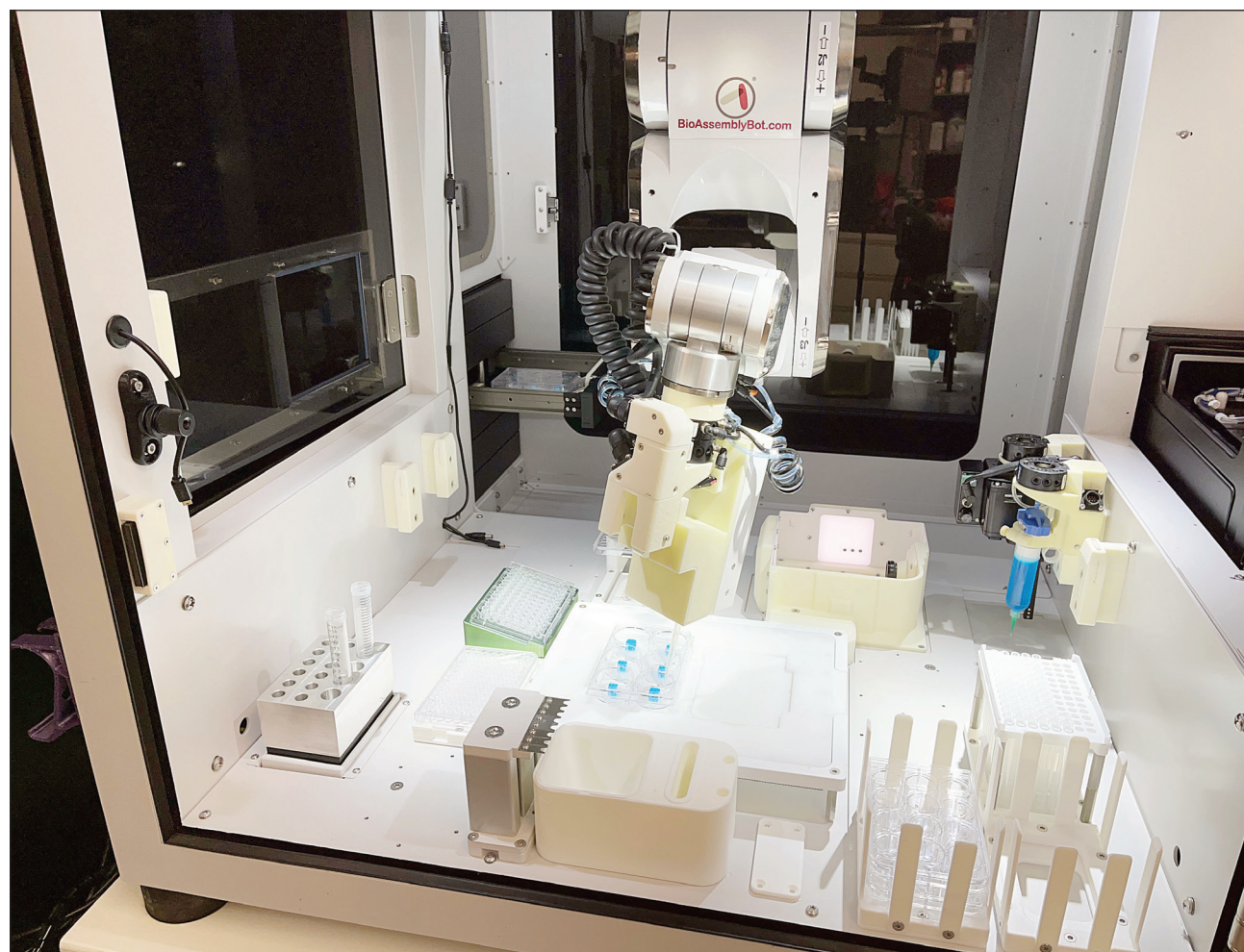
"I'm not sure how well I did," Hoying said, thinking back.

He did well enough to go into the scientific field, and to focus on living tissue and regenerative medicine. He's at the forefront of a growing discipline, tissue therapeutics.

At this year's Wicked STEM Expo, he will speak on "Rebuilding the Body: Advances in Tissue Therapeutics."

A day in the lab

Hoying is the chief research scientist for Advanced Life Solutions in their Life Sciences division (ALSLS). The company's headquarters is in Louisville, Kentucky,



The BioAssemblyBot, or BAB for short, is a robotic platform with a multi-access arm. An instrument tells BAB what to do to build specific tissue.

and the Research Division works out of Manchester's Millyard.

Life Sciences, he said, is a subsidiary of the company dedicated to creating tech platforms to facilitate

therapeutic tissue repair.

"The concept of tissue therapy is relatively new," he said. "So many different disciplines go into the process of building tissues to repair diseases."

The company's to-do list includes using science and tech to identify molecules causing a disease, discovering new drug pathways, and testing of drugs without using ani-

mals for the research.

Advanced Solution's core technical platform is the BioAssemblyBot, or BAB for short, according to Hoying.

"BAB is a robotic plat-

form with a multi-access arm, and an instrument tells BAB what to do to build specific tissue," he said.

According to Advanced Solution's website, BAB offers a way to readily manufacture, replicate and scale in size advanced 3D tissue models. With BAB, design, simulate, fabricate and collaborate on advanced 3D tissue models.

All roads lead to tissue

Hoying came to tissue studies through a circuitous route. He studied general biology as an undergraduate, got his master's degree in plant physiology and attended medical school at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia.

He conducted laboratory studies on blood vessels and remembered being fascinated by "how the smallest blood vessels grow, especially in tissue repair."

After earning a doctorate degree in physiology from the University of Arizona, and postdoctoral work at the University of Connecticut, he performed research work at the Universities of Arizona and Louisville, working alongside clinicians, engineers and mathematicians, all focused on the

See **Tissue**, Page 9

Tissue

From Page 8

question, “Can we cure disease with the replacement of tissue?”

He met Michael Galway, president and CEO of Advanced Life Solutions Inc., and came to work for the firm.

Hoying, 64, has seen many advances in medical science over his lifetime. He remembers when the first bone marrow transplants were achieved, and said, “Now it’s routine.”

He’s seen the development of corneal transplants and the grafting of tissue from one donor to another.

Rebuilding of tissue has been “online” for 10 to

15 years, he said, adding, “Hundreds of clinical trials are on the market right now.”

Hoying and his team are involved in a project with the Department of Veterans Affairs involving rebuilding bones in the jaw.

“We’re working with an innovative group out of Seattle, with Dr. Beth Ripley of the Puget Sound VA,” he said.

The project, which started in 2018, involves finding a way to rebuild the lower jaw after removing a tumor, Hoying said. The solution so far involves using a small bone from

the calf in the lower leg to replace the jawbone.

“Getting a calf bone to look like a jawbone is — challenging,” he said.

The project is also challenging because the researchers need the replacement piece to be living.

“If we use plastic, metal or ceramic matter, it could be subject to infection,” he said.

“From a science perspective, it’s a fascinating challenge,” Hoying said. “From a patient perspective, the replacement improves their quality of life and also their survival rate.”

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Spark Academy introduces advanced manufacturing to students

By **Gabriel Perry**
Union Leader Staff

The field of advanced manufacturing is the real-world piece that fits STEM into a broader technological puzzle.

At Spark Academy of Advanced Technologies in Manchester, leaders understand that well.

“We have learned that introducing is an understanding,” said John Tuttle, director of Spark Academy. “We’re now building career paths and finding ways for students to understand what advanced manufacturing is.”

Spark Academy is a free public charter school for New Hampshire students

grades nine through 12. Located at Manchester Community College, Spark Academy is working to build pathways for students to enter the advanced manufacturing field and nurturing their development along the way.

Founded in 2019, Spark Academy serves 108 students and takes 30 new freshmen each year. Tuttle, named director of Spark Academy in 2022, previously served in administration for education for Easter Seals.

“Education shouldn’t be special, education should be focused around each kid,” Tuttle said.

“Finding ways for a

student to have a voice, to be engaged in their education and really working to be part of it makes a huge difference,” he said.

At Spark, students learn to solve open-ended problems and engage in internships to prepare for contemporary and future careers.

Students can also earn college credits through a dual-enrollment program, and some have earned an associate’s degree before a high school diploma.

And when it comes to advanced manufacturing, Tuttle said there are misconceptions.

“In advanced manufacturing, a lot of parents think manufacturing jobs

are for the people who couldn’t do things in school or they’re something to fall upon if you need it,” Tuttle said.

“Advanced manufacturing is an amazing career,” he said.

Tuttle, and leaders at Spark, are working on new pathways to introduce their students to careers in advanced manufacturing.

And it works. Students from Spark have gone on to myriad colleges across New England and Japan, and have found advanced manufacturing careers at companies like Walmart, BAE, Coca-Cola and Rev-Tec, to name a few.

The success is due, in part, Tuttle said, to the

ways Spark has grown since 2019.

“We’ve opened up the pathways,” he said.

Now, students work toward HVAC certifications and others in fields including cybersecurity, math, biology and information technology. They’ve also added programs outside of those involving robotics, like graphic design.

Students have increasingly gravitated toward careers in advanced manufacturing, Tuttle said, partly because the flexibility of their program allowing students to earn college credits but also because the program itself is growing.

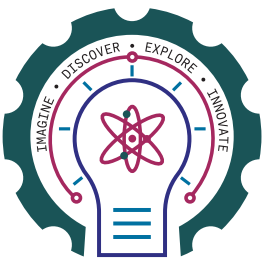
“Because more options and connections with the companies are growing, there’s been more interest,” Tuttle said.

Concurrent to providing a robust technical education, teachers and administrators at Spark are working to understand the needs of students and better identify where the gaps are.

Tuttle said those include social skills, conflict resolution and communication.

“In the technology world, we’ve stopped talking to people,” he said.

“We don’t just focus on the academic piece, we focus on building the best student,” Tuttle said.



NEW HAMPSHIRE UNION LEADER WICKED STEM Northern New England STEM Expo

Presented by



SPEAKERS

JAY HOYING

Chief Scientist, ASI Life Sciences
Rebuilding the Body:
Advances in Tissue Therapeutics

CHRISTY JOHNSON

Director of Education and Workforce Development, ARMI
Join the Future in Biomanufacturing:
Education and Career Pathways

JANICE M. MOSER, PH.D.

CMC Lead, Safi Biotherapeutics
Reimagining the Global Blood Supply with
Manufactured Red Blood Cells

PHILIP MAGNUSZEWSKI

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FIRST ROBOTICS will demonstrate student-built robots and showcase several of its competition programs.

FIRST LEGO League: Explore a variety of student-built robots and preview the 2026 BIOGLOW Challenge.

FIRST Tech Challenge: Watch medium-sized robots compete on a 12-foot-by-12-foot game field.

FIRST Robotics Competition: See 150-pound robots demonstrate the latest REBUILT game challenge.

Get a hands-on look at the science behind regenerative manufacturing. **ARMI's** exhibit will feature a lab-based pipetting activity, ghost (decellularized) organs and other cell-based products on display, along with educational resources and information about careers in the field.

A variety of **FOOD TRUCKS** - Mi Casita, Kona Ice, The Eatery

More speakers and attractions to come!



Nashua's ASD: Building the next generation of STEM leaders

By Gabriel Perry
Union Leader Staff

Nashua's Academy of Science and Design is something of a diamond in the rough.

The 750 students who attend the public charter school focused on science, engineering, design and other STEM disciplines represent 35 countries across the world.

Attendance is free to every student in New Hampshire.

"We're just about to launch our 20th year of operations, so we're excited to celebrate 20 years," said Rick Bartle, board chair at ASD.

"We've been growing pretty rapidly over the last five years or so," Bartle said.

And it's easy to see why. Serving students in grades five through 12, ASD is recognized as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence and received New Hampshire's top rank by U.S. News & World Report.

"Our recognition nationally and locally speaks for itself," Bartle said.

Since 2007, ASD has worked to prepare students for college and careers in the realm of science and technology, and it reports that 100% of its graduates attend four-year colleges.

"I think that this program is unique," Bartle said.

In their middle school



PROVIDED BY ASD

Students at ASD work in a classroom.

years, students learn about STEM broadly, investigating fields including aerospace, computer science, engineering, environmental science, chemistry, physics and biology.

Students are encouraged to work hands-on, and classes are frequently instructed by professionals in industry.

In high school, students begin to foster a specialization in chosen STEM fields. They engage in advanced coursework, conduct research and learn how what they do in the classroom can be applied in real life.

"It's incredibly im-

portant to me that New Hampshire retains a competitive advantage in this

space," Bartle said.

Bartle is an aerospace professional himself,

and said when he graduated college he hadn't collected any hands-on experience and realized how valuable an asset that would make a young professional.

"For us, foundationally, math and computer science are at the core of virtually every STEM career," he said.

No matter what students choose to pursue in life, Bartle said, math and computer science are "universal skillsets transferable to any discipline."

It's the emphasis on exposing students to unique academic programming, grounded in the nitty-gritty of real life application, and the opportunities students have access to while at ASD that Bartle says makes the difference.

He said he's particularly proud of their ability to offer unique programming to students, like

courses in aviation and space science.

In one class, for example, students learn to design and build a spaceship capable of delivering a payload.

When Bartle first toured ASD, before becoming involved, he was introduced to a group of juniors who invented an application called "PickUp Patrol," now widely used by school districts including in the one he sends his children to.

"They had me at that," Bartle said. "I was shocked by the confidence of these young students."

Bartle encouraged any student, or parent of a student, interested in STEM to go to events like Wicked STEM.

"Wicked STEM is a fantastic example of the space that is made to facilitate those a-ha moments," he said.



The Advanced Regenerative Manufacturing Institute (ARMI) BioFabUSA and ReGen Valley, know that the future of next-generation biotherapeutics depends on a strong, skilled workforce. That's why we're proud to participate in WICKEDSTEM.

Together, we are building a future where education, opportunity, and innovation intersect - giving young people the skills, confidence, and access they need to lead, invent, and transform industries like biofabrication.

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