

Engineers of Tomorrow: Toyota Helps Michigan Science Center 'Catch 'Em All'

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Detroit (July 21, 2016) — Inspiring today’s students to become tomorrow’s science and engineering leaders is something Toyota believes is critical to society. Whether it’s autonomous cars, flying cars or something that has yet to be envisioned, the future of mobility depends on sparking children’s interests in engineering and science careers.

Likewise, as the region continues to face a shortage of STEM professionals, it is important to expose children to the different opportunities and career choices available to them. In support of creating that next generation of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) professionals, Toyota has donated \$1.44 million to Michigan Science Center (MiSci) located in Midtown Detroit. This donation is the latest of many efforts by Toyota to promote and expand STEM education initiatives.

“It’s critical to foster innovative thinking at a young age,” said Toyota Technical Center Senior Vice President Jeff Makarewicz. “Developing that interest early on can create great opportunities not only for students, but for the industry as well. We’re excited to make this donation, and for our continued partnership with the Michigan Science Center.”

The donation will be used to transform and upgrade the Toyota Engineering Theatre (TET). The TET is a unique, 4D multi-media experience that engages visitors with the transformative, dynamic and exciting world of engineers and engineering.

Since MiSci's opening in 2012, the TET has hosted more than 94,000 students, families and curious minds of all ages. In the past 8 years however, engineering has changed and the STEM sector has continued to grow. With Toyota's support, MiSci will be able to meet these new demands and upgrade the theater's technology, creating a more robust experience. The upgrades will include a state-of-the-art HD projection system with 3D viewing capabilities; enhanced space and lighting for a more immersive experience, and the creation of universally designed videos that play in 4D theaters and standard digital media players.

The funding will also help MiSci expand its ability to foster STEM education by developing all-new programming and educational connected learning initiatives for both teachers and students.

“Toyota's donation allows the Science Center to do more than just upgrade the TET. This is an opportunity for us to present STEM in a relatable and relevant way, while increasing student interest in STEM careers,” said Tonya Matthews, Michigan Science Center president and CEO. “This opportunity allows us to continue our mission of being a premier institute for STEM learning and experiences in Michigan.”

The Toyota Engineering Theatre and connected learning programs are designed to combat common misconceptions surrounding engineering by portraying engineering and the world of science and math in a fun, dynamic way.