

Students mentor kids at the Zurich Classic

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Megan Woods knew as a third grader that she wanted to be a scientist. But the third-year doctoral student in the Tulane University Department of Chemistry does not see that same enthusiasm for science and math among today's youth.



Graduate student Layla Freeborn and sophomore Maddie Bishop-Van Horn demonstrate science principles to students from Lafayette Academy Charter School at the Chevron STEM Zone at the Zurich Classic. (Photo from Chevron)

It is of such concern to Woods that when she was asked to be a mentor for the Chevron STEM Zone at the Zurich Classic April 24th-27 at TPC Louisiana in Avondale, La., she didn't hesitate signing up. Seventeen other students joined her.

"There have been several studies proving that interest in STEM drops off around fifth grade," Woods said. "I want to spread my love for science with the next generation in hopes of showing them that they can do anything they set their minds to."

STEM is an acronym for science, technology, engineering and math, and the STEM Zone, a partnership between Chevron and the Professional Golf Association, travels to PGA golf tournaments around the country to engage children in the "science of golf." The 3,600-square-foot STEM Zone features various stations where students can learn such concepts as speed, aerodynamics, volume, spin/friction and energy

through golf.

On April 25, students from Lafayette Academy Charter School were among 1,000 area school children who visited the STEM Zone. Stations included putting greens, a golf simulator and a mock television studio, with teleprompter and green screen, for children to learn about media technology.

Layla Freeborn, a fourth-year graduate student in the Tulane Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, said the United States lags far behind other industrialized nations in math and science, and programs such as the STEM Zone can go a long way in preparing students for the ever-growing global economy.

“It's incredibly important,” she said. “There's a push in education (for children) to do more engaged learning, rather than just sitting and listening to someone talk.”