



2017-2018 H. William Christ Educator Prize Winner Maria Evans

Dr. Maria Evans came to education after a lengthy career as an aerospace engineer. She was motivated to leave the engineering field for the opportunity to inspire and impact the lives of students. Since joining the Foxcroft School faculty in 2010, she has served many roles including as a science teacher, math teacher, science department chair, STEM department chair, and Director of STEM Education. Additionally, she has coached volleyball, Odyssey of the Mind, and Team America Rocketry Challenge teams.



Under Dr. Evans' leadership, the already strong STEM program at Foxcroft School transformed into a signature program. Many new course offerings were added including AP Environmental Science, AP Computer Science Principles, STEM Applications and Technology, Forensic Science, Explorations in Engineering, Aerodynamics, and Computer Programming Logic and Design. The driving principle behind these course additions was to deliver content using exciting, engaging, active learning approaches. Students are exposed to a breadth of technology across the curriculum, enabling them to learn how to be successful with any new tool or software product. Evans was recognized for her excellence in teaching by earning the inaugural Mary Louise Leipheimer Excellence in Teaching Award in 2015.

Dr. Evans is particularly proud of is Explorations in Engineering. This is a service learning course taught in partnership with Purdue University's EPICS K-12 (Engineering Projects in Community Service). In its eighth year, this semester elective has student teams partner with non-profit corporations in the community to design, build, and deliver projects to benefit their project partners. Over 15 projects have been delivered to partners including therapeutic riding centers, museums, local elementary schools, the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, and local nature preserves.

Dr. Evans has helped solidify several strategic partnerships to support Foxcroft School's annual Expedition K2M, a STEM competition for middle and high school girls, and Jump into Game Design, a middle school programming night for girls. Each year at Expedition K2M, 160 girls compete as teams in five STEM events challenging them in physics, biology, chemistry, math, and logic. Female engineers from K2M, Inc., a biomedical engineering firm, design and run one event, then do a meet and greet with the competitors. Jump into Game Design has successfully introduced over 70 middle school girls to computer game design through a partnership with the Scalable Game Design team at the University of Colorado. In one evening, the students create a fully functional version of Frogger or Ms. Pac-Man.

Dr. Evans has been a leader in the evolution of Foxcroft School's STEM program. By introducing curricular and co-curricular programs that grab the interest of the students, recent graduating classes have seen a significantly higher percentage of students heading into STEM majors in college.