



2025 STEMville Science Summit



About the Program

STEMville Science Summit is an annual conference-style event that engages 4th through 7th grade students in hands-on science activities at Morehead Planetarium and Science Center. STEMville is a signature event of the North Carolina Science Festival and offers opportunities for students to connect with scientists and other STEM professionals.

In its 10th year, the event was planned based on the original vision, for underrepresented youth in STEM to attend along with high school student volunteers that assist participants in getting to sessions around the building. This year, our staff worked with community organizations that support students from underserved backgrounds. Public registration was also offered to allow anyone that wanted to attend the opportunity to do so. Sessions were led by UNC and Duke graduate and undergraduate students from underrepresented backgrounds to ensure students had the opportunity to see themselves as scientists.

As students arrived, activities led by Gilead staff volunteers were set up in the Gateway Gallery at Morehead that allowed students to engage with real scientists.



My parents always rave about how the kids come back from STEMville pumped about their career paths and beyond! You are making a difference!!

-De'Costo Lawson, Hillandale Kings & Queens



Students then shifted to the Full Dome Theater for a short keynote address by Alexandra Valladares. Alexandra Valladares is a proud Latina double graduate of North Carolina Central University. She holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry with a minor in biology and a master's degree in earth science. An immigrant and proud graduate of Hillside High School, she has nurtured a passion for science since she was young. Alexandra currently serves as Program Coordinator for the Duke BOOST program, whose mission aims to create a pipeline that attracts, engages, supports, and retains underrepresented minority (URM) students in the sciences throughout their pre-collegiate education.

After the keynote address, students rotated through various sessions that included hands-on science activities ranging from learning the difference between acids and bases by exploring pH with cabbage, Newton's law of motion by building ballon cars powered by air and using microscopes to observe water samples of small living organisms.

STEMville Science Summit continues to embody Morehead's motto of Science for All by providing access to opportunities to engage with STEM topics for young minds from populations that are historically underrepresented in these fields.



First, I would like to thank you for the wonderful STEMville Science SUMMIT last Saturday! Students loved every moment and parents were delighted with everything. It was a wonderful experience for them - also, just so you know, one of our students told his mom that now he wants to be a Scientist!
-Maria Sales, El Centro Hispano



STEMville By the Numbers

- **125 participants**
- **5 community organizations**
- **16 UNC student session leaders and keynote speaker**
- **100% of sessions led by minority scientists**
- **9 Gilead STEM professionals**
- **12 High school volunteers**
- **65% of participants indicated that they are more interested in science because of STEMville**



Sponsor Appreciation

We are grateful for the continued support of Gilead Sciences, both financial and in-person, that allows Morehead to produce this event at a low or no cost to participants in an effort to reduce barriers to entry in science.