

STEM Scouts Lab 1816 Goes Virtual!

From neuron key chains to balloon muscles to dancing caterpillars and balls with legs, STEM Scouts has gone virtual this year! Twelve fourth and fifth graders from around the Council, from Stevens Point to Phelps, meet every Thursday afternoon at 4:30 over Zoom.

In many ways, the meetings are like in-person meetings, beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance and the Scout Oath and Law. At the beginning of each meeting, Scouts have the opportunity to share their projects in photos, videos or on-screen. We've even had a virtual badge ceremony, with parents placing the lanyard with the Get Under Your Skin badge around their Scout's neck.

In the Get Under Your Skin module, Scouts made a bone, using straws, sponges, wool and tagboard to represent the layers of human bones. They also made a model of the bones and muscles of the arm to learn about how muscles help our bones move. In two other lessons, they learned about the heart, lungs and brain.

Currently, the Scouts are working on an Animation module and have used three different animation programs. They've created stop-motion videos showing how the Very Hungry Caterpillar ate an apple, analyzed the movements of a dance and animated characters to create their own dances, and practiced their storywriting and dialogue writing skills. They've seen some pretty impressive STEM innovators, including one who created a working artificial hand from LEGOS and another who created incredibly detailed clay figures for his stop-motion animation projects.

In fulfilling their Oath to "help other people at all times," the Scouts have undertaken two service projects. For the Get Under Your Skin module, they found creative ways to help people in need get healthy food over the holidays. The Scouts' projects ranged from personally delivering food baskets, to donating food to food pantries, schools and churches, to helping a disabled person shop for food. For the Animation module, the Scouts will create a video and share it with someone who may be lonely or isolated in this after-the-holidays pandemic winter.

The Scouts have been very responsible in coming to the meeting with the needed supplies, participating and sticking with their assigned tasks. They are also very adept Zoom users! Parents are a big part of the lab's success as well. Next up – It's Not Magic, It's Magnets!