The Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) Chesapeake Post Hosts Student STEM Networking Meeting
By Arthur Lee

The Chesapeake Post of the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) held their annual student networking luncheon on December 21, 2017 at the Wetlands Golf Club in Aberdeen, MD. Geo-Technology Associates (GTA) sponsored the event. A total of 74 attendees enjoyed lunch, STEM displays, presentations and student workshops on internships and college scholarships. Thirty-four students attended, along with parents and local STEM professionals.

Bill Baker, the Chesapeake Post president, addressed the students and emphasized the importance of networking when looking for internships and future education and job opportunities. Tom Wirth, Vice-President for GTA, thanked all the attendees and spoke about the company, which was established in 1985 and currently has 16 office locations throughout the mid-Atlantic region and North Carolina. GTA employs more than 350 engineers, geologists, scientists, technicians, and support personnel, and focuses on geotechnical issues such as subsurface exploration, geotechnical and foundation engineering, groundwater resource and wastewater disposal issues, and geo-spatial services.

Stan Childs, the chair of the scholarship and mentoring committee, described the Post’s academic scholarship program, and the SAME Engineering and Construction summer camp application process and dates. Stan introduced one of the Post’s 2017 summer camp attendee, James Walsh, a senior at C. Milton Wright.

James spoke about his many engineering and recreational activities packed into the week-long STEM camp at the US Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO. James announced that he had recently been accepted to the US Naval Academy. Learn more about STEM camp opportunities here:
http://www.same.org/STEMCAMPS
Karen Price, a member of the Post Scholarship and Mentoring Committee, introduced Stephanie D’Anna, a young member of the Post and a geographic information specialist with the US Army Corps of Engineers in Baltimore. Stephanie gave a presentation on her 10-week deployment to Puerto Rico to map the island’s electrical power grid after Hurricane Maria. Her mapping work directly aided in getting the major power transmission lines restored.

After lunch, the students were divided into three groups. The students rotated among briefings on Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) Internships, Money for College, and Speed Mentoring. Displays were set up by the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE), and the Army Education Outreach Program (AEOP). Krystal Wagemann and Melissa Meinke, from ORISE, described how they work with the organizations on APG to find and place interns. The interns earn a stipend during the summer breaks, and participate in ongoing research projects. Jerry Crabb discussed AEOP STEM enrichment activities, competitions, apprenticeships, and DOD scholarships and awards. Adlene Wilks-Wright and 4 team members from APG Human Resources spoke about summer internships and the Pathways Program. Stacey Lambert from CERDEC had a display for the Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship established by the DOD. The scholarship supports undergraduate and graduate students pursuing degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Karen Price briefed the parents and students on the various opportunities for funding college educations. She provided a comprehensive overview of the college financial aid process to include describing the differences between grants, scholarships and loans, how and when to apply, and how to search for scholarships. Karen also reviewed the SAME scholarship criteria and provided tips for filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Twelve STEM professionals provided students the opportunity to sharpen their interviewing skills during Speed Mentoring. Students met potential mentors from academia, and corporate and government organizations. Students had three minutes to introduce themselves and talk about their academic interests before moving to the next mentor.

If you missed the meeting and would like to apply for a SAME Chesapeake Post scholarship, completed applications must be submitted no later than 4 PM March 30, 2018. The application is available for download on the www.same.org/chesapeake website.

Arthur Lee is a member of the SAME Chesapeake Post Board of Directors.