

eCYBERMISSION Impact Story – Austin Baker



The 2014-2015 eCYBERMISSION competition year has brought great success not only for team participants but also the wonderful volunteers that help every year to make eCYBERMISSION a great STEM experience.

Austin Baker, a first-year volunteer with the competition, serves as a Space Operations Officer in the U.S. Army. He graduated in 2008 with an engineering degree from the University of Michigan.

As a volunteer CyberGuide, Austin guided teams in their mission folder completion by encouraging them to ask questions, delve deeper into topics and areas of research and interest, and to maintain integrity throughout the competition. He thinks it's important for kids to have that mentorship available to them.

Austin first learned about eCYBERMISSION from the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) headquarters. ATEC does a great job with STEM outreach and finding new avenues to get involved with STEM-related initiatives such as eCYBERMISSION, and Austin signed-up as a CyberGuide after a traveling representative informed Soldier and Civilian leaders of the eCYBERMISSION competition and solicited for volunteers.

"I knew my role was to interact with the students in an informative and educational way, but I didn't know exactly what to expect as a first-time CyberGuide," said Austin. "A student would get a response from an electrical engineer, then a software engineer. What's great about eCYBERMISSION is that students are getting professional insights from a variety of STEM disciplines, which significantly enriches the experience for students."

He enjoys taking things apart—something he learned from his dad, also an engineer—in his leisure. "I will always encourage children to explore the world around them. Taking something apart to see how it works can often be as interesting – or more so – than the thing itself." In addition to the importance of integrating STEM-related processes such as the scientific method into student curriculum and extracurricular projects, Baker also stressed the need for a positive work ethic.



"The mentorship from my dad while growing up has really inspired me to get involved in doing the same for others – particularly students," said Baker. "eCYBERMISSION as an extracurricular activity is fantastic because it links students with professionals they would never have talked to otherwise. It's a great way to provide people who have a passion for science and engineering with the opportunity to pass that on to a younger generation." He is excited and looks forward to participating in next years' STEM competition as a CyberGuide!



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