

I AM STEM

Ruth Ray

Ruth Ray is the STEM integration coordinator at the Warrensville City School District. She has an environmental engineering undergraduate degree and a master's degree in education.

"NEVER STOP TRYING TO FIGURE IT OUT."

Did you have any mentors that helped you along?

My first mentor was absolutely my grandmother, who had a love of the environment. We grew a garden every year; we harvested our garden every year; and I grew up in the inner-city. My grandmother grew plants, and my grandfather would order herbs from the botanical gardens, so I always had an exposure to the very natural parts of life. It just encouraged my love for stray cats, birds, and all of those different things. So, my grandparents were my first mentors.

What advice do you have for kids exploring the world and discovering what they're interested in?

One thing I always say when I have the opportunity to talk to scholars is to tell them to 'never stop trying to figure it out.' I always just encourage them to have a constructive struggle. I always tell kids, 'never stop trying to figure it out, and never stop access.'

I didn't explore math enough

At a young age, I stopped. I decided to stay where I was, and I never really explored a lot of math. I stopped figuring it out and told myself, 'I'm just going to do it enough to get it.' But I started telling myself, and now I tell kids, 'to never stop trying to figure it out.' And when they do that, they end up tapping into all these other talents that they have and all these other ways of learning something new.

What does STEM mean to you?

STEM education is an avenue for all learners to learn the way that they need to learn.



The NeoSTEM Ecosystem is a collaboration of organizations throughout Northeast Ohio who partner to improve STEM educational opportunities for all students. Formed in 2014, the NeoSTEM Ecosystem's goals are to improve meaningful STEM learning opportunities for all students in the Northeast Ohio region. As one of 94 ecosystems operating as a part of the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice, the NeoSTEM Ecosystem holds regular virtual and in-person meetings to learn about what community educational needs are and to develop solutions for those needs. For more information, please contact us at info@neostem.org.

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