

District I

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

AMA clubs and members often engage in outreach initiatives in their community to introduce young people to aeromodeling. Unfortunately, most clubs are in rural locations and outreach efforts seldom reach urban kids.

The following report from Associate Vice President Steve Goler describes how he and AMA member Reggie Showers were able to introduce urban kids to aeromodeling and the positive influences the hobby had on each of their lives.

A few months ago, I invited a friend to one of the model aircraft jet rallies at Plum Island RC Flyers in Newbury, Massachusetts. He took videos of the jets flying and showed them to one of his friends, Felicia Huggins, who is an advisor with the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) for John Pierce School and the Lincoln School in Brookline, Massachusetts.

METCO is a school integration program that enrolls urban Boston students in high-performing public schools in the suburbs to reduce racial isolation. Children get a great education, make lifelong interracial friendships, and are better prepared for working in a diverse global economy. I have had three younger siblings attend METCO schools and they are all today successful citizens making a difference in the communities in which they grew up. Felicia shared the videos with her students who were excited after seeing the jet flights and they wanted to know more about the amazing model aircraft and aeromodeling. The spark was lit.

Felicia asked if I would participate in a Zoom meeting with the children and I jumped at the opportunity to share my knowledge of the hobby and how it helped me make career choices. I asked Reggie Showers if he would assist in the

Zoom presentation and he agreed.

Reggie is a well-known AMA member and ambassador for the hobby who, through hard work and faith, has overcome life challenges of being a bilateral, below-knee amputee to become a world champion motorcycle racer, accomplished pilot, snowboard instructor, and inspirational speaker.

We began the Zoom session with a classroom full of inquisitive children. We offered a brief history of the AMA and its mission with information about its 2,400 clubs, flying sites, youth membership, educational programs, scholarship opportunities, and its website links for more help.

We discussed the knowledge, skills, and relationships that we acquired from the hobby. Students asked questions about altitude, speed, distance, flight control, and how long to learn to fly a model airplane, but surprisingly no one wanted to know how much airplanes cost.

Reggie explained to them how people that looked exactly like them were the Tuskegee Airman and their Black fighting squadron was a significant part of helping to win World War II. The point is that it does not matter what your skin color is; it is that you can do anything and be anything you want to in this country with hard work and dedication.

We ended with drone videos and how drone flying can be one of many career paths stemming from the hobby with examples of drone use in fire and rescue, home sales, medical deliveries, security surveillance, and aerial inspections. The sky is literally the limit when it comes to radio-controlled aircraft. The seed has been planted and people like Reggie Showers and I are there to water the seeds to watch them grow!

Thank you Steven and Reggie for a great report on how we might engage urban kids in aeromodeling through METCO-type schools. 



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**AMA District I
Promotes
Equity & Diversity
In Education &
Aeromodeling**

METCO is a school desegregation program that enrolls Boston students of color in suburban schools to expand their educational opportunities in an ethnically diverse setting. AMA members Steven Goler and Reggie Showers (who is buddy-box flying a youngster in the above picture), engaged in a METCO Zoom meetings to introduce students to aeromodeling, AMA, and the positive impact the hobby has on people's lives.

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Educational outreach is a wonderful way to expand the hobby beyond the “hobbyists,” influence community members, and inspire the next generation of STE(A)M (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) innovators through aeromodeling. Associate Vice President (AVP) Daren Hudson describes how we are pursuing this educational outreach in the following report:

Academy is our organization’s first name, and education is in our DNA. Reaching out with open minds and out-of-the-box thinking provides numerous opportunities to maximize success for educators, students, and newcomers to this versatile STE(A)M educational tool.

Typical hurdles include creating easy access for teachers (often non-modelers) to varied and flexible methods and curricula to accomplish goals within their limited timeframes and needs. Teacher training for basic knowledge and skill-sets to use with students while being mentored by AMA members and clubs is one technique.

AMA instructors or mentors facilitating basic



A photo from the Rye Junior High School’s STE(A)M program where teams learned multiple skills building and flying foam board Cubs. Curriculum development is ongoing.



Drone Soccer is played inside a netted area for safe, dynamic gameplay that fits inside any school gym.

training on smaller, electric trainer aircraft with buddy boxes, SAFE technologies, and simulators work best. The AMA safety code and guidelines should be incorporated, but should be centered around classroom, indoor, and schoolyard-size venues. When teachers reach basic instructor levels, the AMA instructors might transition to mentor roles and supporting programs.


By reaching out to your district volunteer leaders and the AMA Education department, you will find support and numerous resources. A great ice-breaker video is Total Control, using the Foam Plate Glider 9 along with other tools that can assist educators.

The key is understanding the teachers’ perspectives and adapting to their challenges, while including flexible uses of AMA safety and educational programming and your own brainstorming to utilizing all types and disciplines of aeromodeling to hook the interest of the students.

On the subject of flexibility and various types and disciplines, enter Drone Soccer! It’s an interesting possibility and one of AMA’s newest SIGs. The concept is designed to culminate with teams and competition. District I is actively pursuing the acquisition of a “demo bundle” to introduce this fun, exciting option as an additional arrow for an educator’s quiver of STE(A)M tools.

To maximize opportunities for success, remember to remain flexible, think outside the box, think from the teacher’s and student’s perspective, and always make it fun!

Your AMA District I leadership, AMA’s Education Department, and AMA Flight School are all here to help you reach out. Enjoy and good luck.

Thank you, Daren, for this report and for heading up the STE(A)M efforts in District I as well as participating in AMA’s national educational initiatives. 



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