

**Linda Stewart, Program Delivery Partner, FIRST SC:**

My story as a STEM educator began when I took a step back from being a Design Engineer in the manufacturing industry to become a home educator. While I truly enjoyed sharing my love of science, math and nature with my own children, little did I realize that through my 17 years as a home educator that I would educate so many more students through informal and formal STEM classes and a variety of extracurricular activities. Shortly after I moved to Charleston in 2009, I was asked to mentor a FIRST LEGO League team. Four years later, I started and became the lead coach for a FIRST Tech Challenge team, Rohming Robots. During my six years as a FIRST Tech Challenge coach, my team members and I advocated for STEM by sharing our robot projects and other hands-on STEM activities at STEM festivals, Girls in Aviation Day, the Coastal Carolina Fair, various manufacturing and tech expos, and with manufacturing and engineering organizations and SC Legislators as well as individuals within community. Now as FIRST South Carolina's Program Delivery Partner for FIRST Tech Challenge, I am encouraging teams and STEM educators across the state to do the same in their own communities. It is my hope that students in every South Carolina community have the opportunity to benefit from the wide-range of 21st century skills that students are able to learn as part of a FIRST team and turn them into a STEM career as my own son has.