

Design Squad Training Summit, November 9, 2006
National Academy of Engineering, Washington, DC
Remarks

Richard (Rick) C. Peters – 2007 Engineers Week Chair

Good Morning, everyone. I am really pleased to see such a great turnout at this kick-off summit. I am joined in chairing Engineers Week 2007 by Co-Chair Dr. Juergen W. Gromer, Vice Chairman and President, Tyco Electronics Corporation, who sends his best wishes as we launch our Design Squad outreach.

Tyco is one of the Engineers Week 2007 partners supporting this Design Squad initiative. I would like to take a few moments to thank several others on behalf of the National Engineers Week Foundation.

Intel – you have been a strong supporter of Engineers Week for many years and we are delighted that you are helping to lead this new project. Wendy Hawkins and Cathleen Barton with other Intel executives have been steadfast in their support and truly understand the need for long-term investment in education.

Thanks also to NCEES which sits on the Engineers Week Steering Committee and is celebrating an important anniversary – their Centennial year.

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers - USA and American Society of Civil Engineers have been leaders in outreach for Engineers Week.

The National Science Foundation has supported outreach and diversity efforts that benefit all organizations here today.

One of the most important things to note about our Engineers Week partners is that while most of them provide monies, they all provide motivation. Individually many of the organizations here today have terrific outreach projects but I believe that we must come together to be successful.

The Engineers Week portfolio includes an effective array of informal outreach programs that succeed only through the hard work of thousands of volunteers.

Our National Engineers Week Future City Competition celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2007. Through the years we've grown from five to 40 sites and now engage more than 1,100 middle schools, more than 30,000 students annually, and 7,500 volunteers who donate 225,000 hours.

Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day will be celebrated February 22. Thousands of women engineers – and men – will reach out to one million girls in kindergarten through high school.

We are working with the outreach staff of the PBS show Cyberchase to reach even the youngest students and to make math connections to engineering and the real world.

Our Discover Engineering outreach is the umbrella for some 45,000 volunteers who work with 5.5 million students and teachers.

We've come to know a little something about mobilizing and supporting volunteers.

Enter Design Squad.

For years, those of us in the engineering societies heard "If only we had a television show like LA Law!" For those of you too young to remember that show, when the series was popular, enrollments in law schools increased quite noticeably.

WGBH has given us our LA Law show for Engineers - Design Squad.

As you know we have worked with WGBH before and they have come to know and appreciate the engineering community.

We engineers know we can provide the volunteers and enthusiasm to reach children and thankfully we can count on WGBH to provide wonderful content and effective outreach materials.

In addition to the research you've already heard about today, the National Engineers Week Foundation recently conducted research to determine career and education interests among 'tweens for a different project. Our research shows that while middle school students have not necessarily decided on careers, they ARE turning off to certain careers.

This presents a unique opportunity for Engineers Week volunteers to intervene, and Design Squad will give us the right tools.

I believe Design Squad will become very popular to this audience so they will be receptive to our work with them.

We volunteers will be able to start new outreach with Design Squad. In essence, it gives us the ability to greatly enhance what we are already doing.

Please remember, Engineers Week is the culmination of a year-long effort so don't turn your outreach efforts on and then off in February. Take advantage of what you'll learn today to seize many opportunities, and utilize them throughout the year.

Please call on the Society of Manufacturing Engineers and the National Engineers Week Foundation to let us know how we can work with you, and how we can support you.

Thank you.