

COMMUNICATIONS: Celebrating Success

#NJSTEMMONTH
was a powerful,
free, marketing tool
in the state
of New Jersey.



IF WHAT YOU DID ISN'T COVERED PUBLICLY IN SOME WAY, IT IS LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED.

Effective communications are as critical for ecosystems' success as engaged partners. In a conversation series, Pressing Topics, three ecosystem leaders share ideas for connecting with any audience.

The statewide [New Jersey STEM Pathways Network](#) is lucky to call Kim Case its managing partner. Case works for a communications firm on top of her role at the Research & Development Council of New Jersey and her former life as a lawyer. With a diverse set of skills, Case has the entire state talking about STEM.

"We were able to expand an existing program's NJ STEM Week into a whole Month. March is officially [NJ STEM Month](#) by gubernatorial proclamation," Case shares. "By offering mini grants to partners throughout the state and using free communication platforms like Twitter, the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network leveraged work that was already happening in the state as an opportunity for communities to get excited about STEM. It's a win-win for everyone. Community-based organizations are able to highlight their work, families are notified of existing (often times free) programs in their areas and it makes legislators look great."

HIGHLIGHTING THE WORK OF REGIONAL PARTNERS BUILDS TRUST AND BOOSTS YOUR COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS IN WAYS ONE ORGANIZATION CAN'T DO ALONE.

"Our goal is to amplify the voices of all network members," says [Remake Learning](#) Lead LaTrenda Leonard Sherrill. "We are always asking our Ecosystem members to submit information on various channels. Remake Learning uses the home page of our website as the main connection point for all members. Our blog and other pages discuss all of the work going on, including events hosted by other partners and member profile pages."



*CSforPGH showcases member's work
in CS from around the region.
It highlights more than
20 partners.*

IT'S WORTH INVESTING RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE THE WORK.

*Remake Learning
Days leverages
existing, regional
expertise to raise
public awareness
of STEM.*



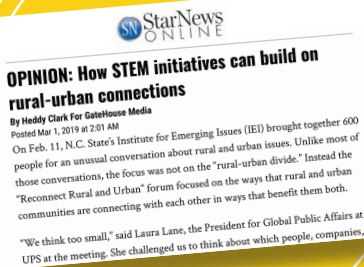
Leonard Sherrill also speaks candidly about learning from failures. "By relying on partners to generate content, we realized the partners with more resources were able to contribute more. We had to take a step back from communications to look at our work through an equity lens. Using our [equity pillars](#), we were able to leverage Remake's communications resources to highlight work with our rural students, girls and students of color."

TAKE-AWAYS

IN THE BEGINNING, WHEN YOU HAVE FEWER RESOURCES AND VOICES, IT IS IMPORTANT TO DIVERSIFY YOUR COMMUNICATION MEDIUMS. FROM SOCIAL MEDIA TO PRESS RELEASES, WEBSITES TO OP-EDS, THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO DELIVER YOUR MESSAGING IN WAYS THAT KEEP IT INTERESTING.

With fewer resources, Cohort 4 Ecosystem Lead Hedly Clark shares how **STEM SENC** keeps the message interesting. "As a newer Ecosystem, we are still pulling things together as we go along. Right now, our content is mostly made up of relevant information I pull from the different listservs and distribution lists I am on to create a PDF newsletter."

"I am also finding opportunities to speak at conferences and forums to spread the word. I recently spoke at a conference with many legislators in attendance. Even just five minutes on the agenda gets STEM SENC included in the follow-up minutes posted to their website. That creates a domino effect." Clark continues, "I have even written an **Op Ed**, which has worked really well in our favor. I was even able to secure a little bit of funding through these methods!"



OPINION: How STEM initiatives can build on rural-urban connections
By Hedly Clark For GateHouse Media
Posted Mar 1, 2019 at 2:57 PM
On Feb. 11, N.C. State's Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) brought together 600 people for an unusual conversation about rural and urban issues. Unlike most of those conversations, the focus was not on the "rural-urban divide." Instead the "Reconnect Rural and Urban" forum focused on the ways that rural and urban communities are connecting with each other in ways that benefit them both.
"We think too small," said Laura Lane, the President for Global Public Affairs at UPS at the meeting. She challenged us to think about which people, companies,

Be Consistent.

Whether you do communications work yourself or hire experts, the secret to being effective is being consistent.

Plan.

Communications must be planned alongside all work and initiatives.

Concentrate on channels that work for you.

Ecosystems don't have to pursue every communication medium, start with what works for you first.

Press releases and op-eds effective vehicles for raising public awareness and creating opportunities.

They often result in a domino effect where one contact leads to another etc. Blogs and social media are also great tools.

Highlight existing work.

Ecosystems can highlight the work of their partners and of the collaboration and don't need to create all of the content.

Reuse and repurpose content.

People miss things and find news for so many different mediums. Old content can seem new when repurposed.

PANELISTS

Kim Case, executive director, Research and Development Council of New Jersey; New Jersey STEM Pathways Network

Hedly Clark, director, STEM Learning Cooperative, University of North Carolina Wilmington; STEM SENC

LaTrenda Leonard Sherrill, lead, Remake Learning, CS for PGH; Pittsburgh Regional STEM Learning Ecosystem



A FULL RECORDING OF THE WEBINAR IS AVAILABLE AT:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQOCq-lfqvU>

STEM Learning Ecosystem Discussion Series - Pressing Topics

The Communications Conversation is the second in a series of webinar-based discussions designed to meet the needs of local and regional Ecosystem leaders. Topics of high interest were identified through a survey distributed to Ecosystem leaders. Panelists were selected based on self-assessed expertise and data from the Ecosystems Indicator Tool (EIT).

OTHER WEBINAR TOPICS IN THIS SERIES INCLUDE:

- Business Connections
- Organization and Governance Structures
- Programs
- Fundraising