



# KELLY HERITAGE FOUNDATION PREPARING SAN ANTONIO'S GEN-NEXT TECH TALENT

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**SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS** – Over 200 guests recently gathered at Capital Factory and AREA 21 — both located inside the Boeing Center at Tech Port — for a community showcase that highlighted the impact of Port-affiliated nonprofit Kelly Heritage Foundation on local education initiatives.

The event, which was part of the city-wide DreamWeek 2024 celebration, featured student exhibitors who eagerly shared their innovations in an

array of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines such as aerospace, cybersecurity, space science, robotics and more.

"We're bringing in a bunch of young folks who have been part of the programs the Kelly Heritage Foundation sponsors so that they can not only show off what they are doing, but that we can show the connectivity between the inspiration and the jobs that are available on this campus and beyond," said Port San Antonio President and CEO Jim Perschbach, who also serves as the Kelly Heritage Foundation's Board Chair.

The students who took part in the exhibits have directly benefitted from the work made possible by the Kelly Heritage Foundation — which honors Kelly Air Force Base's legacy and Tech Port's future by raising and distributing funds to support educational and career opportunities across multiple school districts throughout San Antonio.

In 2023, the foundation contributed over \$400,000 to fund initiatives that provided students with life-changing experiences such as a computer build program, a drone technology building and pilot program and the opportunity to be part of the latest cohort of space exploration talent with the WEX Foundation's project-based Lunar Caves Analog Test Sites (LCATS) program.



"Our board has committed to serving students here in San Antonio so that they are aware of all of the amazing aviation and aerospace jobs available right here at Port San Antonio," said Dee Howard Foundation Executive Director Christina Martinez, who oversees the organization's drone technology program.

"The Kelly Heritage Foundation has been supportive of our programs," said WEX Foundation STEM Specialist Kathryn Bolish. "What they've really helped us do is to not only allow our programs to be cost-free to all the



students, but to reach districts here in San Antonio with students for whom this might be their first opportunity in STEM."

"We're adept at getting kids interested in space exploration," said WEX Foundation Founder and Executive Director Director Sam Ximenes. "We want them to migrate their career paths and trajectories of what their interests are toward space. We bring to

them these programs that are really awesome in terms of hands-on experience, project-based experiences and working with actual engineers and scientists."

During the event, guests had the opportunity to meet some of the students who have taken part in these programs and hear about their plans ahead as they continue in their educational and future career pathways.

"It's giving me a lot of exposure to different fields and opportunities in STEM that I can start getting involved in from a young age," said student Mihika Puvvena.

The students also exhibited their technologies at adjacent AREA 22, the museum space operated by the San Antonio Museum of Science and Technology (SAMSAT).

"We have a great opportunity to highlight what we do here, all the technology that is at the Port campus and all the career opportunities that are available to students and families that are nearby," said SAMSAT Chief Learning Officer Dr. Clint Zintgraff.

