





Encouraging STEM success

Having taken the reins as the new President of the Board of the Chemical Educational Foundation® (CEF) at the start of the year, Bob Moser is excited at the prospect of growing the organization and its *You Be The Chemist*® programs by inspiring more young people to pursue a career in chemicals.

Brenntag's Global Vice President for Corporate Relations and Government Affairs has been a Trustee for CEF since 2015 and has seen firsthand the positive impact CEF's *You Be The Chemist*® programs have had in fueling students' excitement and enthusiasm for science.

"I am hugely passionate about supporting any activity that provides young students better opportunities in science and am truly honored to take on this important role," he says. "I am very proud to have been part of Brenntag's continued leadership in an organization we helped found in 1989."

Originally known as the NACD Educational Foundation, it was formed to establish a network that spread an important message of chemical product stewardship to 750,000 customers and their communities of NACD distributor members. In October 1997, it was renamed Chemical Educational Foundation.

Today, CEF is focused on building the future STEM workforce through free science programs that encourage students to explore sustainability questions and community solutions.

CEF has traditionally been well supported by chemical distribution and its chemical producer partners, says Moser, but continuing to expand that support and growing the diversity of its sponsor base will be a priority during his tenure.

"CEF's focus is on STEM education for those who will ultimately be contributing to our society and our businesses in the future," he says. "It's really important we get the word out about the great work CEF does, so we can create a stronger donor base. That

means being able to grow across the U.S. and Canada and interact more with schools in states where we're currently only modestly represented."

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CEF's success relies on the efforts of volunteers, and Moser is keen to encourage more involvement from employees of sponsor companies.

"I think having your people involved in something like this has so many benefits," he says. "The volunteers are really important; they help at events, visit the schools, support teachers, and talk about the work their companies do. It's very much in Brenntag's DNA to have its people involved in CEF. At the peak (prior to the COVID-19 challenges) Brenntag probably had close to 200 employees volunteering at various events and challenges. They're pleased to be doing something good for their community."

Brenntag also recently pledged to promote CEF's *You Be The Chemist*® Activity Guides and further develop the Career Connections program.

Aimed at K-8 students, the over 50 free activity guides and teaching tools



Bob Moser
President, CEF Board of Trustees

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have become an invaluable resource for schools, providing step-by-step instructions for simple, hands-on science experiments using readily available household items.

CEF recognizes how important it is to enthuse and stimulate students about

science early in their academic careers. Studies show that giving young learners the opportunities to explore STEM education in grades K-8 makes them far more likely to continue studying the subjects through high school and consider them as a future career choice.

Brenntag's support will help to increase promotion of the guides significantly, encouraging downloads from CEF's website and directly from teaching platforms.

Plans are also underway to develop CEF's Career Connections webpage further to help expand the future workforce. Brenntag employees will be able to share insight into their various job roles, from truck drivers to chemists working in the laboratories, so students can read real-world stories and understand the breadth and variety of a potential career in the chemical sector.

"As the world's largest chemical distributor, Brenntag has the bandwidth to encourage young people to consider a career in chemicals," says Moser. "Our ultimate goal through this relationship is to help students realize that science is fun, interesting, challenging – and for everybody."

"Unfortunately, the chemical industry doesn't get a terribly fair representation by a lot of people, simply because they just don't understand it," he adds. "We want to help people better understand the important role chemistry plays and get students enthused about science."

"Ours is an industry that ultimately makes lives better. We want to help CEF lay the groundwork to get more students studying and make them realize the many fun and exciting opportunities available to them."



Support CEF

- There are many ways to support CEF and help attract top young talent to the industry. If you or your company are interested in donating, sponsoring, or volunteering, visit www.chemed.org for more information.