

Greater Huntsville Section Blasts Off for STEM

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On October 29th, the AIAA Greater Huntsville Section supported the Huntsville Area Rocketry Association (HARA) Rocket City Blastoff as part of the section's pre-college outreach program. The weather turned out to be clear and sunny on a hotter-than-usual October afternoon. This event allowed individuals to launch their homemade model rockets or a beginner's rocket model built on-site. The HARA volunteers were very knowledgeable when helping the kids learn about the model rocket parts and answering any other questions that popped into their bright, young minds. With the event being so close to Halloween, some participants brought in some spooky themed rockets, including a flying battle axe, pumpkin rocket, and a skull rocket. The kids really enjoyed watching these unique rockets blast-off, while also launching rockets of their own. Some even had a little rivalry drag race with their siblings, such as the two daughters of our previous section chair, Kurt Polzin. There were about 60 rockets that filled the sky throughout the day and a few that didn't quite make it off the rail—an occurrence that many engineers are familiar with and a great lesson about failure for the kids that participated. The section also staffed a booth to educate the public about AIAA and the section's STEM activities, giving away foam rockets and gliders and other AIAA items during



the event. We were able to get contact information for one potential member and saw some familiar faces that participated in the event. This was Greater Huntsville's second time participating in the Rocket City Blast Off; the inaugural launch was in 2014. Overall, it was a great K-12 STEM Event thanks to our volunteers, section Chair Brandon Stiltner, Pre-College Outreach Director Dustin Poisson, and Vice Chair Naveen Vetcha.