

Scottish success at STEM Inspiration Awards

St. Andrew's University Public Engagement department nominated Henry Rae for the Outstanding STEM technician award. He was shortlisted and invited to the House of Lords for the award ceremony and, much to his surprise and delight, was announced as the winner by Lord Sainsbury.



Henry Rae receiving his STEM Ambassador Award at the House of Lords.

STEM outreach and public engagement activities are well supported and popular within the School of Medicine and the wider University. After seven years of organising these, Henry now has members of staff chasing him down the corridor asking if he has any events they can help with.

"I especially like activities with Primary 5, 6 and 7s as I find they are always excited and interested and

not afraid of taking part in whatever is going on. My aim is to entice them into science by giving them interesting, fun and educational activities. By the time they go to high school I won't mind if they have forgotten the details of what they did as long as the feeling of 'science is really interesting and fun' stays with them and hopefully will lead to careers in science."

"Although a lot of activities I do can stand alone as a kind of 'wow! that's cool', if I ask the children why this particular thing happens it makes them think and try to understand what's going on. I have found that teachers have a lot to cram into their lessons and have to know a lot about a lot of wide and varying subjects. Having STEM activities delivered by external experts helps both staff and pupils understand the subject more deeply."



Henry has delivered STEM activity sessions to over 1000 school children and been told many stories about the positive impact on the children. One was about a boy that the teacher couldn't get to write more than 2 lines. When asked to write a thank you letter he wrote 2 full sides of A4 in one sitting! At a public science discovery day Henry noticed a 3 year old looking at what he was doing. Henry handed him an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and said "Want a shot?" Without instruction he started the Defib, placed the pads in the right positions and shocked the manikin correctly. He didn't say a word, just grinned from ear to ear the whole time. <<