

# Kids Love Technology

Last month, I took four students to IMTS, including my son Matt, his girlfriend, Kate, and my daughters Emily and Renee.

Kate, a sophomore studying engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, has a genuine interest in manufacturing, so it was natural that she attend IMTS. But the other three? My kids? Well, let's just say that their interests lie elsewhere. Matt, also a sophomore, is studying business at UW-Platteville. Emily, a sophomore in high school, wants to join the Peace Corps. Renee, an eighth grader, wants to be a surgeon.

So you might think IMTS—North America's largest manufacturing technology show—would be a recipe for boredom. You might think I had to drag them there kicking and screaming. But no, this wasn't just Dad coming up with yet another method of teenage torture. Believe it or not, they actually wanted to go.

That's because, like most kids, they're curious about the world and how things work. Even if they've never thought about engineering-focused careers, they're interested in learning what's out there. I took them to IMTS because I wanted them to see and understand that all the stuff they use every day doesn't just magically come from *Amazon.com*. Somebody has to design it. Somebody has to engineer it. Somebody has to make it. I took my kids to IMTS because I wanted them to see that manufacturing and engineering can be pretty darn cool.

And you know what? The show delivered.

I mean, where else can you have an ice cream cone delivered to you by a robot (thanks to Kawasaki), use a mechani-



cal press to build your own yo-yo (thanks to Promess Inc.), and try out augmented reality using Google Glass (thanks to Beckhoff Automation)? We got to see 3-D printed cars. We got to design and launch our own air-powered rockets. And we got to talk to people who make things for a living.

Thanks, IMTS, for giving us the opportunity.

Speaking of opportunities, you all have them, too, and you should take advantage of them. I'm sure you know some kids. Like mine, they're probably not all that interested in engineering or manufacturing. They probably have no idea how things are made. But you can help.

Open up your factory to student tours. Volunteer to talk to the students at your local school. Ask around. I'm sure you can find ways to help educate the next generation. We need young people to be interested in engineering and manufacturing.

I spent several hours with my group at IMTS. We were so busy looking at cool stuff, we didn't even stop for lunch. Best of all, nobody got bored. Unfortunately, we didn't even come close to seeing all that IMTS had to offer. But it's OK, because all four said they want to come back when IMTS returns in two years.

Technology is cool. Spread the word.

Randy Stott



Renee Stott, Kate Simone, Matt Stott and Emily Stott, showing off the air-powered rockets they designed and launched at IMTS 2016.