

# impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

## Partnerships enhance program impact

### AT A GLANCE

Together, partnerships allow for expertise to be shared leveraging local and statewide resources, in turn increasing program impact to build stronger Idaho communities.

### The Situation

In the [STEM Education Strategic Plan](#) developed by the Idaho State Board of Education, the mission is to “Advance STEM for the future of Idaho by increasing all students’ interest, engagement and success in STEM education; preparing students for STEM and related careers; and firmly establishing the partnerships between industry, education and government to make these goals a reality.” The question is how out of school programs and informal educational programs can accomplish this and still include underserved and rural audiences.

### Our Response

After the Idaho STEM Ecosystem’s first annual meeting, early conversations about a partnership aimed at providing hands-on STEM learning to rural and underserved audiences began. Hearing about a low-tech mobile makerspace program, University of Idaho Extension 4-H Youth Development and Idaho’s Out of School Network purchased the license to bring the program to Idaho.

In order to expand the reach of this program, additional leadership was brought on that represented organizations and educational programs that create



Interior build of the pilot Idaho Think, Make, Create Lab.

and provide STEM learning throughout Idaho. In addition to University of Idaho Extension 4-H Youth Development and Idaho Out of School Network, the State of Idaho’s Career and Technical Education, Idaho’s STEM Action Center and Gizmo CdA Makerspace joined the leadership team.

Together, the leadership team has developed a statewide program that will fund, provide, support and deliver Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education to rural and underserved communities across Idaho.

Think, Make, Create Labs are regionally built within high school technical programs to develop STEM skills and foster career exposure. Hands-on STEM activities and curriculum are developed for use within the

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trailers for kindergarten through eighth grade. Professional development training is targeted to support hosts and educators when teaching STEM and using the activities within the mobile labs.

### Program Outcomes

The leadership team is comprised of professionals that represent the range of Idaho organizations that build and support STEM education. By aligning these partners that all have an end goal of expanding STEM education and access within Idaho:

- Community relations are strengthened by reducing competition;
- Opportunities for funding are strengthened by showing the partnerships working together;
- Expanding local access to resources;
- Share expertise and strengths;
- Further promote Extension programming — the university can provide research-based curriculum as well as aid in program data and collection.
- Expanding Idaho's STEM education network

### The Future

One Think, Make, Create (TMC) Lab is currently used within out of school 4-H programs while four more labs are planned for completion the spring of 2021. The financial support from industry donors and the educational demand for hosts to procure a mobile

makerspace is high. By leveraging the team's professional network, STEM expertise and industry contacts TMC labs are quickly expanding to be used with Idaho's youth for hands-on, informal, STEM learning, supported by Idaho's own STEM industry, government and education.

Idaho's Think, Make, Create Labs leadership team:

- Claire Sponseller, area Extension educator, 4-H STEM, University of Idaho Extension 4-H Youth Development, [csponseller@uidaho.edu](mailto:csponseller@uidaho.edu)
- Anna Almerico, program director for Idaho Out of School Network, [aalmerico@jannus.org](mailto:aalmerico@jannus.org)
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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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