

Everybody wins with eMentoring

Global education company Cricket Media, Inc. aims to promote equity in education by producing and distributing award winning content and collaborative learning experiences that are accessible and affordable for all children. Laura Woodside, the Vice President of Education Products, for Cricket Media, highlights their recently formed partnership with IEEE, the world's largest technical professional organization dedicated to advancing technology for humanity, to launch TryEngineering Together; this is a new eMentoring platform giving companies a resource to mobilise their employees as volunteers to inspire and educate the next generation of engineers, scientists and technical professionals.

Cricket Media was founded by Nina Zolt and Miles Gilburne with the vision that all children, especially those living in poverty, should have an equal chance to realize their academic and personal potential. They initiated In2Books, a program connecting students and carefully screened adult volunteers to read great books (they got to keep) and correspond about the intriguing questions the books raised. When the program proved highly successful, Zolt and Gilburne acquired the Cricket magazines so they could scale and provide a digital eMentoring experience with a larger variety of high-quality content. In 2017, a nimbler, scalable version of In2Books, called CricketTogether, was completed. "Students, teachers, and adult eMentors were equally as excited with CricketTogether as they were with In2Books. One student said it was the best experience in his life. A teacher said it motivated students who had given up hope about learning," Ms. Zolt comments.

The eMentoring experience also forms the basis of TryEngineering Together, which Cricket Media is now launching in a partnership with IEEE. "TryEngineering Together is a focused effort to increase the probability that students in under-resourced communities will pursue

science and engineering careers," Ms. Woodside explains. "Research tells us that while students are making career decisions in 3rd–5th grade, most students haven't heard of engineers, have no ideas how useful and important engineering is, or that there are such a vast number of engineering careers that students can match their avocation with their vocation. By pairing student with STEM-enthusiast eMentors to build a learning friendship through exchanging thought-provoking letters about intriguing science articles with related hands-on activities, students learn about engineering careers and begin to develop the skills they need to pursue science and engineering studies." The program currently has a classroom in New Jersey matched with Western Digital employees and other classrooms matched with IEEE employees. "Employees want to give back, and especially want to be able to share their expertise with the next generation,"

says Ms. Woodside. "What typically hinders this desire is that volunteer opportunities often take too much time away from work and home life. TryEngineering Together, on the other hand, is a micro-volunteering opportunity that is flexible with time and place and one where volunteers can see results." The program doesn't uniquely produce benefits for students, she emphasises. "Employees say their jobs are more fulfilling when they are provided with opportunities to make a positive impact, and they become more engaged when they feel they are working for a socially responsible company."



Cricket Media, Inc.

Website: www.cricketmedia.com