



APPROACHING \$1 MILLION INVESTED TO NURTURE YOUNG TECH TALENT

NEW GIFTS TOTALING NEARLY \$100,000 TO AEROSPACE AND SPACE SCIENCE PROGRAMS BROADEN THE KELLY HERITAGE FOUNDATION'S IMPACT AS IT CONTINUES TO CONNECT AREA YOUTH TO LIFE-CHANGING LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN THE REGION'S ADVANCED INDUSTRIES.

SINCE 2023, ALMOST 1,000 AREA K-12 STUDENTS HAVE DIRECTLY BENEFITED FROM THE FOUNDATION'S SUPPORT TO INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.

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SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS — The Kelly Heritage Foundation, an independent educational nonprofit affiliated with Port San Antonio, continues to take big strides as it supports some of the community's most exciting STEM/STEAM enrichment efforts. Within less than two years, the Foundation has distributed almost \$1 million in gifts to area programs.

"Our strategic giving to innovative learning experiences is paying big dividends as seen by the number of young people who are being inspired," said Kelly Heritage Foundation Board Chair Jim Perschbach, who is also President and CEO of Port San Antonio. "Because of this, and the hard work of dedicated educators and industry partners, hundreds of students across our community are now focused on being part of upcoming generations of tech talent. In the months ahead, we look forward to broadening our reach even further."

In its latest round of awards, the Kelly Heritage Foundation made its first-ever donation, totaling \$47,000, to the Space Exploration Academy (SEA) Foundation—a STEM outreach program providing holistic space exploration training to students as it prepares them for careers in space sciences. The locally-based nonprofit will use the funds to provide needs-based scholarships to its initial cohort of high school students during the current 2024-25 academic school year.

Areas of learning include how to conduct scientific experiments in lunar and Martian conditions and how drones navigate above the surface of the Red Planet; lunar rovers; space-based construction; and principles of rocketry and satellite technology, among others. Faculty mentors who developed the curricula include top space scientists, researchers and educators from the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), NASA and the Southwest Research Institute (SwRI).

The enrichment program is taught on weekends during the academic year and summer, and will provide students with a SEA Foundation Certification and opportunities for internships at area enterprises.





Above: After building units from kits, students who participate in the Dee Howard Foundation's program learn safe drone operation and ultimately earn a corresponding FAA license.

In the program's first year, funds provided by the Kelly Heritage Foundation will also pay for key pieces of equipment, including a vacuum chamber, a model lunar rover, various drones and virtual reality (VR) headsets. Additionally, up to 50 students will be given free laptops which they will keep at the end of the program.

"We're deeply appreciative of the Kelly Heritage Foundation's generosity and confidence in our vision by providing essential seed funding for an exciting new program," said Dr. Kiran Bhaganagar, SEAF Chair and CEO. "This support is an investment in launching the futures of some very bright young minds in our community as our upcoming generations talent in the space sciences."

The Kelly Heritage Foundation made a separate \$50,000 gift to the Dee Howard Foundation — another area educational partner that supports K-12 enrichment activities focused on aerospace and aviation. Those funds will allow the Dee Howard Foundation to expand ongoing drone technology programs to an additional 40 middle and high school students in the Harlandale and Northeast independent school districts. Previously, the Kelly Heritage Foundation provided a combined \$250,000 as the Dee Howard Foundation first rolled out its highly popular drone program during the 2023-24 school year.

The program, embedded in the school day to increase access, exposes area youth to some of the most innovative technologies in aerospace and aviation, including electric vertical take-off and landing (EVTOL) flight and Advanced Air Mobility.

"Once again, the Kelly Heritage Foundation has come through in a big way for students who have their eyes and their hearts set on futures in aviation and aerospace," said Tyler Schroeder, Board Chair of the Dee Howard Foundation. "This latest gift adds to the enthusiasm and momentum of our very popular program by widening the reach of the young people who we serve and deepening their appreciation for one of the world's leading growing industries."