

## Letter One

Dear Parents,

In the STEM Stories program today, your child read a book called *Tiny Stitches* by Gwendolyn Hooks. This book tells the story of Vivien Thomas, a young man who dreamed to attend medical school and become a doctor. After losing his savings in the stock market crash, Vivien took a job at Vanderbilt University under Dr. Alfred Blalock. Vivien knew that the all-white university would not admit him as a student, but he hoped working with the doctor would get him closer to his dream. Based on his research and experiments as Dr. Blalock's research assistant, Vivien developed a procedure that was used for the first successful open-heart surgery on a child. Ask your child to tell you about one of the "big ideas" from this book!

During the next after school session, the students will take on the role of engineers, designing a prototype of a surgical instrument. Ask your child to share the ideas he or she brainstormed about their prototype today and talk about the steps they plan to take to build their model during the next session.

Thank you for sharing your child with us for this exciting STEM Stories program!

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## Letter Two

Dear Parents,

In the STEM Stories program today, your child worked with his or her team to start designing their surgical instrument. As a team, they planned what the device would look like and worked together to draw out design ideas. After receiving design "approval," teams began building a prototype. Ask your child to share the ideas his or her team brainstormed today and talk about how they worked as a team to build a prototype!

During the next after school session, teams will test their prototype. After testing, groups will discuss what went well and how they could improve their design.

Thank you for sharing your child with us for this exciting STEM Stories program!

## **Letter Three**

Dear Parents,

In the STEM Stories program today, your child worked with his or her team to test the prototype they built last session. The teams watched all of the prototypes tested and applauded for each design. At the end of the session, teams reflected on what they liked about their design and how they may change or improve it. Ask your child how his or her finished product stood up to the test and what they learned during this lesson!

Thank you for sharing your child with us for this exciting STEM Stories program!