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# STARBASE Inspires Youth in the Field of Technology

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High tech centers are constantly expanding, just look at Cyber Innovation Center moving into Bossier.

This means more jobs and we need to provide qualified candidates for those positions.

Barksdale Air Force Base has a program that inspires young people to take an interest in the world of technology.

Victoria Price went through the Starbase program in Bossier in 2003.

She recently graduated from Louisiana Tech with a BS in Electrical Engineering Tech.

"My dream job would be to work in alternative energy like solar or wind power," she said.

Her interest in technology started at a very young age and she was really inspired after going to Starbase in fifth grade.

"It was really exciting actually," she said. "It was really hands-on and that's something that I really enjoy."

To this day she remembers her favorite lesson at Starbase.

"You could actually program this car," she said. "You could plug in a little module to the computer and download some programs onto it and the car would run on its own and to me as a little 5th grader, that was the most amazing thing that's ever happened."

Lessons like that get kids excited about science, technology, engineering, and math or STEM.

"Victoria is a perfect example of one of our missions here at Starbase," said Executive Director of Starbase Louisiana Kathy Brandon. "We think it is critical that young women become excited about entering STEM fields. We have a shortage of women that are represented, particularly in the area of engineering. Less than 10% of the degrees awarded each year go to women in engineering."

Brandon says she's happy to see Victoria enter the technical field because the jobs are out there.

"We do have a critical shortage of those that are trained for those critical STEM jobs," said Brandon.

In fact, she says your chances of getting a job right out of school are pretty good.

"According to statistics in Louisiana, we have three job openings for every skilled STEM worker," said Brandon. "On the contrary, we have three workers for every one vacancy in other areas."

Brandon says they want to inspire young people to get passionate about STEM, encourage them to get their degree, and then hopefully keep them in the community.

"There's a company here in Shreveport that has already been in contact with our partner that provides our engineering software that we use with our students and they have already expressed a need, a very strong need, for more engineers and more technicians to fill those jobs in the manufacturing field," said Brandon.

There are even a good number of military opportunities.

"We have many defense supported industries here in our area [in need of] engineers and electricians, she said. "We need other types of science applications and many of those fields have been pursued by foreign nationals," she added. "In a defense supporting industry you need people that are homegrown."

As Victoria looks for her job, she took the time to write a thank-you note to Starbase because she recognizes what an impact that institution had on her life.

"It's very important," said Victoria. "I think that it's a really cool way to show kids how to get involved in science and how cool science is."

"We're very proud of everything that she has done," said Brandon of Victoria. "We hope that her excitement for STEM will be contagious and that other students, other young women, will be interested in entering engineering as she has."

Starbase is so committed to making sure their graduates have the tools they need to succeed they even offer a scholarship.

Brandon says they are still accepting applications for that scholarship.

Click [here](#) [1] for more information on how to apply.

For original article, click [here](#) [2].

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