

Abstract Submitted
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Physics Public Engagement—Not Just for Kids Anymore! TONI SAUNCY, Angelo State University, ANGELO STATE SOCIETY OF PHYSICS STUDENTS TEAM — Engaging the community with physics is a way of developing and supporting a vibrant and strong physics department at Angelo State University. The Society of Physics Students chapter has been actively involved in numerous public engagement activities for over 10 years. These efforts claim to focus on “enhancement of attitudes” for the audience participants, but the benefits of these public engagement opportunities go well beyond getting the younger students excited about science. The more critical need addressed by outreach programs such as ours is getting the undergraduate student presenters engaged as professional scientists, immersed in the true culture of scientific citizenship, and taking ownership of not only the physics they present, but also the impact that they potentially have on the students with which they interact. As undergraduate physics programs across the nation find themselves facing programmatic cuts, the value of engaging undergraduate students in purposeful service as a means of retention in the major should be considered as a standard part of a successful program curriculum.

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