Our nation is facing an important challenge to build a strong pipeline of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) talent in the U.S. education system. Academic institutions play an important role in developing and enhancing K-12 curriculum, teaching skills through workshops and motivating K-12 students to study science and mathematics.

**NEED**

**INITIATIVE**

Discovery Park’s Birck Nanotechnology Center (BNC) has assumed a leadership role in K-12 STEM activities. Faculty, administrators, and graduate students work together to provide K-12 hands-on activities that are fun, interactive and educational.

Birck Nanotechnology Center led a workshop for K-12 teachers in 2009 that formed the basis of a long-lasting teacher relationship with Discovery Park.

In 2010 through 2013, the Birck Nanotechnology Center continued to build this relationship by hosting NanoDays, a nationwide festival of educational programs about nanoscale science and engineering. NanoDays events are organized by participants in the Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network and take place at over 200 science museums, research centers, and universities.

To continue the education impact, BNC developed the first Discovery Park Ambassador program in 2010, in which top graduate students that perform research in the BNC are selected to lead K-12 tours, guide K-12 students through interactive learning experiences and present informative talks on their research and the implications of nanotechnology for the future.

**IMPACT**

- In 2013, approximately 850 participants attended NanoDays from more than 15 schools in Indiana. More than 200 Purdue University students along with ten Purdue faculty and BNC staff participated in the K-12 event.
- In 2013, approximately 500 K-12 students visited Discovery Park and toured the Birck Nanotechnology Center.