

**AFA's National Aerospace/STEM Educators:**

**\*What they are doing NOW**

**\*How this national recognition impacted them**

**\* STEM online resources for at-home education**

**Mark Westlake, 2015 Teacher of the Year**

**Innovation Center Director**

**Saint Thomas Academy, MN**

**2015 National AFA Aerospace/STEM Educator**

Mark Westlake is the Director of the [Saint Thomas Academy Innovation Center](#) (St. Paul, MN), serves as Moderator of the [Saint Thomas Academy Experimental Vehicle Team](#), is a [Lemelson-MIT Fellow](#), and a [Notre Dame Trustey Senior STEM Fellow](#).

Currently, Mark is working at home with his Innovative Center equipment creating 3D printed face shields for healthcare professionals to keep them safe while treating patients effected by COVID-19. See related story [HERE](#). His innovation is being shared in homes and businesses nationwide to assist with the demand.

When he isn't fretting about where the next donation is going to come from or how much welding his students will send home with him, he serves as the Chairman of the Advisory Committee for the [Solar Car Challenge Foundation](#), is the 2018 [National Space Foundation](#) Educator of the Year, the 2015 [AFA National Aerospace/STEM Educator](#), mentors a [NASA Hunch](#) program, coaches a drone racing team, and fosters the inventive spirit in teachers and students all over the United States.



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**Mark Westlake, on being a National AFA Aerospace/STEM Educator:**



I loved my time as AFA National Aerospace/STEM Educator! The award opened a number of doors including one-to-one meetings with both of my US Senators and my US Representative to discuss how we can improve STEM education in our K-12 schools. I have enjoyed developing a greater relationship with our local and state chapters of AFA which has allowed us to participate in a number of community activities such as the Minneapolis/St. Paul Air National Guard Base Family Day. My students have benefited from the resources that AFA has made available to students and teachers and I can't imagine not being an active AFA member!

**Mark's suggestions for STEM resources for at home education:**

**Tinkercad** <https://www.tinkercad.com> Great intro to 3D Design, Simple Circuits, Arduinio, and Coding! Lots of built in lessons.

**Solidworks for Kids** <https://www.swappsforkids.com/> Intuitive modeling program with online video help! Amazing what students can design.

**NASA STEM Engagement** <https://www.nasa.gov/stem> So much to explore! Resources for all grades, students, and teachers.

**Follow Mark on Facebook [HERE!](#)**