Ben Pecora

Job title: Turbine engineer

Job description

Monitoring the setup and breakdown of gas turbines all around the world

What sparked your interest in STEM?

Well, science is the best thing ever and I've always respected it. I mean, physics can literally explain EVERYTHING.

How and when did you know you were interested in a STEM career?

I knew in college that I wanted to go into a STEM field. Getting an engineering degree proves you're smart, period. It has opened so many doors for me career-wise and the kinds of jobs you can get are limitless.

How did you start on your path to a career in STEM and what did that path look like?

It's interesting because I have never been an amazing math student, but I always respected it and appreciated it as something to learn. Until you get to high school you don't really get to pick your own classes, but once I got there I took the courses my school had to offer. I loved AP physics. My teacher, Mr. Norman, was so passionate about it; with physics he could explain anything. I also had a great professor in college, David Finkelstein, who taught us about black holes and relativity. "History of Rocketry" was pretty great too. After college, I had so many job options because of my engineering degree, but decided to become a turbine engineer for General Electric.

Can you tell us a little bit about your job?

Basically my job is to watch people take apart gas turbines and make sure they do it right. The purpose of any kind of turbine is to produce electricity – I work with gas turbines. I get to travel a lot too; I've been to twenty different countries for work.

What would you say to young folks who are thinking about a career in STEM?

I would encourage them to start taking STEM classes as soon as they can and work hard in school. The STEM field is unique because you can shape the direction of it; it's a field of innovation.