For the past five years, students at Amidon-Bowen Elementary School have received a unique and inspirational addition to their science education thanks to the ReSET program.

ReSET, which brings retired scientists, engineers, and technicians into the classroom, exposes students to interactive projects and hands-on experiences that make science and math fun and interesting. This positive exposure, in turn, encourages students to pursue science and math electives throughout their middle and high school careers, and beyond.
“The ReSET program really sparks the ‘scientist’ inside my students,” said Amidon-Bowen third grade teacher Dawn Gray. “The hands-on scientific investigations are engaging and the students are full of questions.”

The ReSET volunteers spend six hours of classroom time each term with the students, building relationships and positive connections. They design experiments, activities, and field trips that allow students to experience the world around them through the lens of scientific inquiry.

ReSET came to Amidon-Bowen through its connection to the Environmental Protection Agency, which previously was headquartered in the Waterside Mall. The EPA’s proximity to Amidon-Bowen resulted in a long history of EPA volunteers contributing at the school.

The volunteers’ involvement extends beyond classroom instruction. Indeed, ReSET encourages its volunteers to share with students the experiences and motivation that drew them into science and engineering fields, and to discuss the schooling such careers require, as well as the kinds of jobs that become available to them as a result of that education.

ReSET’s John Meagher is currently leading his second program in Gray’s classroom. He sends her vocabulary words relevant to the day’s lesson ahead of time and she posts them on the board for students before he arrives.

“As a teacher, I appreciate how well organized the lessons and materials are. Every student has a job to do and no one ever feels left out,” said Gray.

For his part, Meagher appreciates that his efforts with the students extend beyond his time with them.

“I really like working with Ms. Gray,” said Meagher. “She is fully engaged while I work with the students on their science experiments, and is always coming up with captivating ways to help the children learn and remember. It makes a big difference when a teacher sends the message that science matters.”

By: Lucy Rojansky