



ASCEND



- **Mission:** The ASCEND (Advancing STEM-Community Engagement through Neuroscience Discovery) program's overarching mission is to address the national shortage in STEM career-oriented students by tapping the energy and intellect of neuroscientists and their trainees to excite young minds through story-telling sessions, question-driven discussions, and hands-on activities that can illustrate in an age-appropriate manner the amazing advances being achieved in brain science.
- **Goals:** To increase public awareness and understanding of the fascinating research activities of brain researchers who pursue fundamental investigations of our thoughts, dreams, and feelings. To enhance the desire/capacity of young minds to learn/work in neuroscience-linked STEM fields. To, more broadly, transform society into one that values and supports scientific inquiry. To enlarge our nation's commitment to the growth of a well-trained, scientifically literate work force that can ensure maintained U.S. leadership in neuroscience discovery and the translation of brain discoveries into practical benefits for all of mankind.
- **Program:** In the year-long ASCEND program for grades 7-8, students will interact directly with and learn from professional neuroscientists and their trainees from FAU, Scripps Florida, and Max Planck Florida Institute. ASCEND program participants will have the following opportunities for:
 - Learning about science from young neuroscientists that they will see again and again and have maintained exposure and interaction.
 - Monthly presentation of hands-on, interactive, and virtual reality lessons at STEM Studio in Abacoa with intermittent field trips to science labs at FAU, Scripps Florida, and MPFI.
 - Monthly opportunities to engage in webcasts to talk about what was learned during STEM Studio lessons and in podcasts of recent, exciting neuroscience discoveries. *Please note that ASCEND participant's names and/or contacts will NOT be disclosed in podcasts or webcasts.*
 - Graduation ceremonies held at the end of the spring semester. Students will present a poster at a science fair at the South Florida Science Center and Aquarium, where parents and community members can attend and hear about what the students learned during the ASCEND program.

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