The South Florida Science Center and Aquarium, in partnership with the Stiles-Nicholson Foundation, recognized local leadership and innovation in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math with the recent STEM Innovation Awards. The first annual event was held on-site at the Palm Beach Science Center and guests enjoyed a cocktail reception, dinner, music, unique science demonstrations and an awards ceremony to celebrate the honorees.

“I am grateful to our sponsors, the Stiles-Nicholson Foundation, PNC Bank and FPL for being STEM champions,” said Kate Arrizza, CEO of the Science Center. “My job is to open every mind to science, and I couldn’t be prouder of the work being done promoting STEM both at the Science Center and throughout our region, and that’s why it’s important to honor those who are inspiring others and setting examples to support STEM education. Each of the honorees are doing their part to increase STEM and Arts initiatives and make STEM a national priority.”

The STEM Innovation Award winners in the six categories were: Aerojet Rocketdyne: Corporate Innovator award; Dr. Becky Mercer, Palm Beach State College: Individual Leader award; Brett Hannan, The Green School: Business Visionary award; Scott Lehman, Crosspointe Elementary: Educator/Collaborator award; Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens: STEAM/Arts Partner award and Stiles-Nicholson Foundation: Lifetime Achievement award.

“Innovation has been the key to all of mankind’s progress since the beginning of time,” said Dr. David Nicholson, BSc., LLD, CFA, Chairman and Founder of the Stiles-Nicholson Foundation. “According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, STEM occupations are growing at 17%, while other occupations are growing at 10%. STEM education creates critical thinkers, increases science literacy, and enables the next generation of innovators. To compete in a global economy, STEM education and careers must be a local and national priority.”

Other sponsors of the STEM Innovation Awards event included the Palm Beach Post, RGF Environmental and Christina’s Catering.