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Reading Eagle: Tim Leedy | Pine Forge Academy headmistress Nicole A. Hughes, left; Sierra Smith, president of the United Student Movement; Tom Lynch, executive chairman of the board at TE Connectivity; and Sokoni Scott, vice president of the Pine Forge Academy Alumni Association, cut the ribbon on Friday celebrating the new STEM space to be built with a \$50,000 donation from TE Connectivity.

Pine Forge to put \$50,000 donation toward STEM space

Written by [Matt Carey](#)

Saturday January 13, 2018 12:01 AM

Pine Forge Academy on Friday celebrated the opening of a new space focused on science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, thanks to a donation from an international engineering firm.

The private Seventh-day Adventist school in Douglass Township received a \$50,000 donation from TE Connectivity, based in Berwyn, Chester County, toward the creation of the space on the school's campus.

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Nicole Hughes, the school's headmistress, said she believed the new space would help students explore new avenues and interests.

"We hope that today, a little tiny spark may have come to a greater flame," Hughes said during a ceremony at the school.

Already, Hughes said, students at the academy have formed six robotics teams and are entering local competitions.

The new building, constructed between the gymnasium and the boys dorm on the academy's campus, includes one classroom dedicated to math instruction, and a second classroom outfitted with a smart board, robotics kits, tablet docking stations and science equipment. Some construction is still to be completed, but the classrooms are operating.

Tom Lynch, executive chairman of the board of TE Connectivity, helped cut the ribbon commemorating the new space and said the academy's mission of encouraging students to do more than they thought themselves capable of is similar to that of the company's.

"You can't create that environment unless it's inclusive and diverse," Lynch said. "We really wanted to affect our community, put our money where our mouth is, and live inclusion and diversity."

"Don't limit yourself," he told assembled students. "Think big. You'll run into lots of obstacles, I know, but it's amazing when you have this kind of education and this kind of support. Anything's possible, and don't ever let anyone deter you."

"We're so grateful for what they have done," said Sokani Scott, vice president of the alumni association, adding with a laugh that he hoped it wouldn't be the last contribution from the company. "This building right here will train many hearts and many minds in math and sciences."

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