

Sellafield's Rebecca sets daily science challenges for children

The coronavirus pandemic has changed many people's lives. As well as changes to their working lives, parents like Rebecca Ballantyne are also having to entertain and educate their children who are now at home during the working day.

For a science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) advocate like Rebecca Ballantyne, this is something to embrace. It's also an opportunity for her to share her skills with others who are trying to find creative, educational activities for their children.

Rebecca has been part of Sellafield Ltd's STEM programme for some time. She regularly visits schools, nurseries and even universities to share her passion and knowledge with an interested audience. She's now sharing these skills and ideas with a wider audience.

She said:

I am in awe of the workers on the frontline who are putting themselves at risk each and every day to help us. While I am not in the same position, I did want to do something to try and help people.

This is a strange time. We're all adapting to new ways of working. This is daunting for many people, but especially for parents who have children at home with minds to be occupied and a thirst for learning to be quenched.

I have spent a number of years trying to get young people passionate about STEM and I have developed some creative ways of doing with – with even the hardest to impress young people.

I know I am very lucky to be able to work from home, while some of my colleague are still at work. So, I've used some of my spare time to try and make a difference to young people in the area.

Working with her mum, who is a qualified teacher and creative, mixed media artist; Rebecca has launched a new Facebook page. 'Kreative Kidz Cumbria' will share a creative, educational activity for children each day.

The activities are all designed to be practical and easy to complete at home, using everyday items. Each activity lasts around 30 minutes and aims to encourage the creative in children.

Rebecca added:

Schools are providing work, but we all know that it's impossible to timetable a full day's work, so we aim to fill the gap with something short.

One of this week's activities will be to use items we have in the home, such as our recycling, to create musical instruments that can be used in this week's clap for carers on Thursday evening.

We have lots of other activities that I know from my own daughter are fun but are still educational. What's brilliant is that even though the site is new, we're gaining followers quickly and people are also sharing their own ideas.

Rebecca is a chemist at Sellafield Ltd, working in the company's analytical labs. She visits schools and nurseries as part of the Sellafield Ltd STEM ambassador programme. This sees employees visiting educational establishments to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with young learners. It is through this that Rebecca has honed her storytelling skills.

Sellafield Ltd has confirmed this week that any employee who isn't a key worker can volunteer to support their local community during work time. For further details, [see the employee area of our website](#).