

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus  
Secretary of the Navy  
Iridescent Ribbon Cutting  
New York, NY  
Thursday, 5 November 2010

Admiral Carr, thank you so much for that introduction. Congressman Serrano, Councilwoman Foster, colleagues and friends, thank you so much for taking the time to come here today. And most importantly, for the middle schoolers in the audience, thank you so much for waiting patiently while all the old people talk. I promise you I'm the last speaker and I'll get you inside soon so you can start using all the great stuff in the studio.

We are all here to celebrate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and as I've found over a year and a half in the Pentagon – we make an acronym for everything – so those four subjects have collectively become STEM. Anyway, we're here to celebrate the sciences, so I have a question. Who can tell me who it was that first discovered the principle of gravity?

That's why we're all here, that's why the Navy and the Office of Naval Research, led by Admiral Carr, is making such an investment in Iridescent and other science and engineering programs all over the country. We are doing it because ensuring that education is a priority for the United States is a job for all of us. It's the right thing to do for our future.

It is not just the Navy and Marine Corps that will need talented and creative engineers and scientists in the coming years – which I hope will include many of you here in the audience will look at. It is America that needs more scientists, more engineers, and more people to invent new machines, to make new discoveries, and to explore beyond the reaches of imagination and think of things that haven't been thought of before.

Science and engineering will, quite literally, take you to the stars. Tomorrow, the space shuttle *DISCOVERY* will launch from Florida into space. Every one of the six shuttle crew was once a young man or woman, sitting in the very same seats you're sitting in now, wondering how they could get to space. It's not a golden ticket that got them there – for them, they made it because they studied, they learned, and they worked hard to get the chance to see the Earth from above.

That same ethic will bring you so much in life – it could lead you to become a famous doctor, one who discovers the cure to a rare disease. It could lead you to be the one who discovers a new way to produce or use energy, like people across the country are doing now. Did you know that there are people who have figured out how to produce gasoline from grain – but they can make it from algae, trash, or garbage – you know the stuff that grows on the surface of ponds in the parks. Those inventors, like the astronauts, were once middle schoolers, and I'm sure they sat in school and said – hmmm, I wonder if...

And that's what Iridescent has done here – they've created a place where you can say what if... They've created a studio for science and engineering exploration, a place where you can imagine, engineer, and invent. This studio is a safe place with people who want to share their knowledge with you and lead you through the process of discovery. I encourage you to take full advantage of Iridescent's programs throughout the year, things like the Family Science program or workshops conducted here at the studio.

Your only job is to stay enthusiastic about the programs, to seek out scientific adventure and new knowledge. Keep going to museums and science fairs, and take your parents. When you and they do those things, you're putting yourself on the path to discovery, and on a path to lead New York City and our country into the future. And who knows – maybe one day it will be

you who my successors are talking about, when you just took off from Florida and are on your way to Mars.

Thank you, Godspeed, let's have some fun.