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## Information Technology Employee Pays it Forward Preparing Students for Careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)



**Fontana, Calif.-** As a science and technology aficionado, Shannon Burndred has felt right at home working for the City of Fontana Information Technology Department for the past 12 years. In that time, she has been a part of applying the technological advances to help employees serve the public more efficiently. She also gives back to the community through a nonprofit she started called *Starship Robotics*, helping students develop and apply their understanding of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Shannon came to the city from the private sector in 2007 and started out as a Web Developer/Programmer before being promoted to an IT Business Analyst in 2013. "The aspect of my job that I enjoy most is being able to help others," shares Shannon Burndred. "I enjoy working with staff to resolve issues, learn new systems and to improve processes."

Shannon is the primary IT support person for hundreds of city employees working in the Finance, Purchasing, Business License, Capital Improvement Program, Human Resources, and Payroll systems. Currently, she is managing the implementation of a citywide software project called ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) that will improve internal business functions to enhance efficiency. The new software also includes a Citizen Transparency component that will allow residents to easily access information from the city's financial management system online.

Her typical day includes evaluating and responding to reported issues and requests, prioritizing tasks, assessing project status, coordinating resources, scheduling and attending training sessions and workshops, and communicating with the project team (internal staff and vendor staff) to keep the ERP project moving forward.

"It's inspiring to see Shannon at work and managing her projects," shares a coworker. "Shannon is a very dedicated employee and always goes the extra mile to make sure her systems and users are taken care of."

Another coworker states, "Any time we have had an idea or project that we can use to increase efficiency or a problem with a current process, Shannon has jumped right in to help us to achieve our goal."

Shannon lives by the advice she was once given: "It is never too late." Most would be surprised to learn that although Shannon completed high school one year early, she dropped out of college numerous times before completing a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree. She recently added Project Management Professional to her list of credentials, proving that personal growth has no timeline.

For the past eight years, Shannon and her husband have been involved in high school robotics programs. They volunteer their time and home by hosting robotics workshops. "It's rewarding to see the students evolve and develop new skills and confidence over the years. Each year, there is a new robotics challenge presented by an organization called FIRST. The team of students design and build a robot in 6 weeks and later use that robot in competitions with other teams. It's a fun venue for STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) learning and the competitions are pretty exciting!" exclaims Shannon.

In 2018, Shannon started a nonprofit organization called Starship Robotics in an effort to get funds to keep a high school FIRST Robotics Competition team going. "The school district was no longer able to fund the team, but the students still wanted to be able to participate in the competitions. Donations are always welcome," explains Shannon.

Outside of work, Shannon enjoys spending time with family and friends. She likes playing card games and all sorts of puzzles. She enjoys visiting scenic places and road trips. Now, she has an extra special reason to travel as she became a grandma last year to her grandson in England. She has future plans of traveling to visit her family there more often.

Please join us in congratulating Shannon Burndred for making a difference in the workplace and in her community. For more information about the City of Fontana's Information Technology Department, please visit [fontana.org](http://fontana.org).