



**Faridodin “Fred” Lajvardi** is the program manager for the Marine Science Magnet Program at Carl Hayden High School. He has been teaching at Carl Hayden H.S. for 28 years where he leads the Falcon Robotics Team, an extracurricular STEM program that has received national and worldwide recognition. In 2004, the team had its break out moment when students from the robotics team went to the MATE National ROV Championships in Santa Barbara, California and came back as national champions in a competition that some said they had no business even being in. One of the competitors was the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, (MIT).

The Carl Hayden team has gone on to win other national competitions in the field of robotics. His team has been featured in Wired magazine, Reader’s Digest, ABC Nightline and on Soledad O’Brien’s CNN In America series. Three films about the team, *Underwater DREAMS*, a critically acclaimed documentary, *Spare Parts*, a Hollywood feature film produced by Lionsgate, and the latest, an IMAX film titled *Dream Big* by MacGillivray Freeman Films, captures the story in three distinct ways!

Mr. Lajvardi’s team has inspired many other teams in Arizona and beyond. Falcon Robotics has revolutionized STEM education at Carl Hayden High School and has dramatically increased the number of students going into engineering and technical fields.

Mr. Lajvardi believes that every high school should have an extracurricular STEM program to help reverse the science, math and technology deficit that exists in Arizona and the United States. By showing the youth of today that hard work and determination in STEM fields can be fun, exciting and rewarding, this deficit reduction can be achieved.