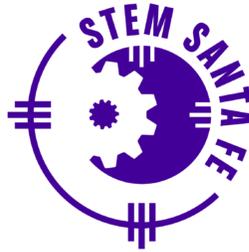


**NEWS RELEASE**  
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### **STEM Pathways for Girls 2019 Essay Winners Announced**

The girls who attended the 2019 STEM Pathways for Girls conference, held on October 5, 2019 at Santa Fe Community College, were challenged to write an essay about their conference experience and how it relates to their academic or personal life. Lina Germann, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of STEM Santa Fe commented: “We received some excellent essays. All the girls that participate in our programs become part of the STEM Santa Fe family. We are always happy to see them come back and participate in our programs year after year, whether at the conference, the essay contest, the monthly workshops or the summer camps.”

#### **1st Place Prize winner:**

**Mariebella Duran**, 8th grader from Taos Academy Charter School, received a Chromebook – donated by Descartes Labs.

Quote from her essay:

*“Attending your conference has helped develop my social skills. I don’t have a lot of friends because I am usually a lot more mature than most of the kids at school ... Attending your program has helped me introduce myself to new kids because a lot of them are shy too.”*



#### **2nd Place Prize winner:**

**Flavia Fernandez**, 5th grader from Gonzales Community School, received a SNAPTAIN A15 Drone – donated by Wildflower International

Quote from her essay:

*“conference taught computer science, engineering, and physical science. Many young girls will never get this chance, so I am very grateful for this opportunity.... STEM has affected my life and has brought me to a new level. This experience was a big impact on my life, and I cannot thank STEM Santa Fe enough.”*



*STEM Santa Fe advocates for, develops, and provides Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programming, mentoring, and resources for all youth, to realize their potential and expand their opportunities in a dynamic world.*

### 3rd Place Prize winner:

**Lilah Herrera**, 6 grader, Pojoaque Valley 6th Grade Academy, received a pair of hand-hammered sterling silver earrings – donated by Malouf on the Plaza.

Quote from her essay:

*“My group (of girls) was really kind and spending the day with new people I didn't know was very fun ... I also met many interesting and highly educated instructors ... The instructors made learning fun, and they explained things in easier ways so all of us could understand.”*



**Many thanks to the businesses that donated the prizes and provided the judges who read and scored the essays: Carol Brummer from Descartes Labs, Carly Rhodeside from Wildflower International, and Jody Feagan from Malouf on the Plaza.**

Historically, the STEM labor market has grown at a higher rate than the total and has fared better in periods of economic decline as seen in 2007-2009. Furthermore, STEM careers receive higher salaries and experience lower unemployment rates than the total workforce<sup>1</sup>. STEM skills are no longer limited to scientific labs but are necessary skills in all fields. The ability to think analytically to solve problems, persistence to solve complex issues, and contributing to teams is essential in all careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Despite the benefits of pursuing a STEM career and the overall growth of the STEM labor market, women remain underrepresented. Only 15% of engineering and 25% computer and mathematical sciences professionals are women<sup>2</sup>. When the demographics are further analyzed, this statistic becomes even less with only 10% of positions in science and engineering being held by women in minority groups<sup>3</sup>.

Research shows that 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls who are involved in STEM activities outside of school are more than twice as likely to choose STEM classes in high school, feel creative through STEM activities, understand the job options in STEM and feel empowered to make an impact in the world through STEM. Engaging with female role models is also shown to have a positive effect on these same attributes<sup>4</sup>. STEM Pathways for Girls conference specifically targets this demographic and acts as a kickoff event for future hands-on activities.

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<sup>1</sup> National Science Board. 2018. *Science and Engineering Indicators 2018*. Alexandria, VA: National Science Foundation (NSB-2018-1). Available at: <https://nsf.gov/statistics/2018/nsb20181/>

<sup>2</sup> National Science Board. 2016. *Science and Engineering Indicators 2016*. Arlington, VA: National Science Foundation (NSB-2016-1). Available at: <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2016/nsb20161>

<sup>3</sup> National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. 2017. *Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering*. Special Report NSF 17-310. Arlington, VA. <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2017/nsf17310/>

<sup>4</sup> Microsoft and KRC Research 2018 *Closing the STEM Gap: Why STEM classes and careers still lack girls and what we can do about it*. Available at: <https://query.prod.cms.rt.microsoft.com/cms/api/am/binary/RE1UMWz>