

News from the Savannah River Site

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For Immediate Release

‘STEM Like a Girl’ empowers next generation of women leaders in science

AIKEN, S.C. (December 2, 2024) – Nearly 60 eighth graders from schools across the Central Savannah River Area recently gathered at the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center ([RPSEC](#)) for the Savannah River Site (SRS) “STEM Like a Girl - Introduce a Girl to Engineering and IT” event. This unique initiative is designed to inspire the next generation of female engineers and STEM leaders.



Nearly 60 eighth-grade students from across the Central Savannah River Area gathered at the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center for the Savannah River Site “STEM Like a Girl - Introduce a Girl to Engineering and IT” event.

The all-day event, hosted by the Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) Education Outreach Programs, gave participants an opportunity to explore career paths in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) through a series of engaging, female-led activities.

“SRNS remains committed to breaking down gender barriers and providing young women with the tools and inspiration needed to pursue careers in STEM,” said Taylor Rice, SRNS Education Outreach Specialist. “At SRNS, women make up approximately 20% of our engineering workforce and 27% of our information technology professionals. This event creates fresh perspectives, fosters innovation and opens doors for students who show an interest in those fields.”

Over 50 volunteers from all Site contractors helped guide students through interactive stations focused on robotics, coding, and electrical, mechanical, design and civil engineering. Students also watched engineering come alive on the big screen of the center’s DuPont Planetarium.

“After participating in the ‘Cracking the Code’ activity, I’m inspired to take more coding classes and possibly pursue a degree in software engineering,” said Olivia Praymous, a student at Greenbrier

Middle School in Evans, Georgia. “It was an amazing experience working with new people and seeing firsthand how cybersecurity experts identify vulnerabilities.”



Students operate and program robots with a volunteer from the M'Aiken Magic Robotics team.



Savannah River Mission Completion volunteer Betsy Booth teaches a student how graphite conducts electricity during the 'Energy Ball and Graphite Circuit' activity.



Team members assess whether a structure they built is strong enough to withstand impact during a building contest.

Annamarie MacMurray, an engineer at [Savannah River National Laboratory](https://www.srs.gov) with over two decades of volunteer experience with 'STEM Like a Girl', said, “It’s incredible to see the full circle moment. Over the years, I’ve watched students who once participated in this program return to the Site as engineers themselves.”

MacMurray led a robotics demonstration, where students explored wearable robotics with lift assist, Rubik’s cube solvers, remote control crawlers, and sensory wireless technology.

“It’s amazing to watch the girls’ faces light up when they realize they can do this too. We’re not just teaching them about STEM— we’re inspiring the next generation of innovators and experts,” continued MacMurray.

Olivia Cavero, a student at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School in Aiken, said, “My favorite part of today was interacting with different types of robotics— from sensory devices to satellite tech. I’ve always been passionate about forensic science and criminology, and this event not only confirmed that interest but also introduced me to a whole new side of STEM.”

Erin McCormick, an SRNS EC&ACP engineer, described 'STEM Like a Girl' as a “safe space” for girls to connect, learn and form new friendships.

“It’s incredibly powerful for attending students to see strong female representation in STEM. They see themselves reflected in TV shows, movies and on social media. Bringing that representation to this event helps them envision a future in a field where women can be underrepresented,” said McCormick. “Watching volunteers from the Site come together to provide that vision was truly inspiring.”



Over 50 SRS volunteers helped guide students through interactive stations focused on robotics, coding, and engineering. The 'Energy Ball and Graphite Circuit' activity showed students how to conduct electricity, using their body to complete a circuit.

"The teamwork I saw during the building competition, along with the kindness from all the SRS volunteers, made this day unforgettable for me," said Savannah Warra, a student at Mead Hall Episcopal School in Aiken.

The event also featured several high school students from the M'Aiken Magic Robotics team, who helped bridge the gap between middle and high school, demonstrating the progression from early interest in STEM to real-world application.

"This experience is so successful because of the volunteers that take time out of their busy schedules to make a difference," continued Rice. "Through initiatives like "STEM Like a Girl," SRS continues to invest in the future of young women in STEM, fostering innovation, diversity, and inclusion in the workforce."

Click [here](#) for more information about SRNS Education Outreach initiatives, and click [here](#) to watch a preview of "STEM Like a Girl – Introduce a Girl to Engineering and IT."

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor and HII partnership company, is responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, and effectiveness of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile; works to reduce the global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and militarily effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad.

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