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For Immediate Release

“This is girl power!”: SRS STEM Like a Girl event empowers next generation

AIKEN, S.C. – (December 10, 2025) – Nearly 60 eighth-grade girls 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.

STEM Like a Girl, hosted by the Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) [Education Outreach Programs](#), is an all-day event designed to inspire the next generation of female leaders in STEM by offering participants the chance to explore career paths through engaging, female-led activities.



Nearly 60 eighth-grade girls from Aiken, Bamberg, Barnwell, Edgefield, Columbia, and Richmond counties gathered at the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center for the Savannah River Site's "STEM Like a Girl - Introduce a Girl to Engineering and IT" event.

schedules to make a positive impact," continued Rice. "SRS remains committed to investing in the future of young students in STEM, ensuring a steady stream of fresh perspectives and innovative ideas that propel our missions forward."

"SRNS remains dedicated to providing young women with the tools and inspiration needed to pursue careers in STEM," said Taylor Rice, SRNS Education Outreach Specialist. "This event not only fosters fresh perspectives and creativity but also opens doors for students interested in these fields."

Volunteers from all Site contractors, nearly 50 in total, guided students through interactive stations focused on robotics, coding, and engineering disciplines such as electrical, mechanical, design and civil engineering. Students also witnessed engineering concepts come alive on the big screen of the center's DuPont Planetarium.

"The success of this initiative is largely due to the dedication of our volunteers, who take time out of their busy

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SRNL volunteer Edelmy Bernardez teaches Langley-Bath-Clearwater Middle School Kate Wilson how graphite conducts electricity during the 'Energy Ball and Graphite Circuit' activity. Over 50 SRS volunteers led students through interactive stations focused on robotics, coding, and engineering.



Lakeside Middle School student Stella Doud wore a robotic glove to learn more about sensors that track and interpret hand and finger movements. This activity also gave students the opportunity to operate and program SRS robots.



Students unleashed their creativity and learned the fundamentals of coding through game development using Scratch during the 'Build-A-Game Workshop.' SRS volunteers taught students basic coding principles to create their own games.

Lauren Nichols from North Augusta Middle School and Charlotte Anderson from Columbia Middle School quickly bonded during their group activities, expressing that the best part of their weekend was witnessing girls from various counties coming together to form new friendships.

"This is girl power," said Nichols. "This experience not only solidified my passion for design engineering and robotics but also inspired me immensely. Witnessing a group of passionate women share their experiences at SRS made me want to pursue this field even more."

Anderson added, "Sometimes, loving science and technical fields can make you feel like an outcast, so I was a little scared to attend alone. However, we've all come together with shared interests and bonded over them. My favorite was the building activity because it gave us a chance to work together in a competitive setting. My group combined our diverse ideas to construct the strongest structure, ultimately earning us first place in the competition. I've truly had the best time."

Lindsay Minnick, SRNS Operational Technology, assisted in the robotics demonstration where students explored wearable robotics with lift assist, Rubik's cube solvers, remote control crawlers and sensory wireless technology.

"Educating young minds and showing them that anything is possible is incredibly enjoyable," said Minnick. "It gives me a warm and fuzzy feeling to know that I can now serve as a role model. By sparking that interest early on, we are preparing for a future where the younger generation can maintain our workforce's knowledge and help bridge age gaps in the industry."

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Shawna Lloyd, Manager, Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility Material Acquisition Group and Elizabeth Tsekrekas, Savannah River National Laboratory Postdoctoral Research Associate, who specializes in Glass, Cement, and Ceramic, both shared similar experiences that ignited their passion.

"I carve out time every year for this event because it's how I got started in engineering," said Lloyd. "I participated in the SRS-sponsored 'Summer Technical Enrichment Program,' which allowed me to explore various technical fields. Before that, I thought engineers only operated trains, but I was hooked from day one. I volunteer for STEM Like a Girl because there is a strong need to broaden opportunities in this field. Eighth graders might not know their future career paths, but this event provides a fun way to expose them to a range of options with strong income potential and societal impact."



Kaylen Moore, Honesti Gantt, Eva Rivers and Tinsley Myers collaborated on the 'Protect the Pringle' activity, where their goal was to design a container robust enough to safeguard a Pringle through a series of unknown challenges.

Tsekrekas added, "In high school, taking 'Project Lead the Way' college-level courses and receiving mentorship really ignited my passion for glass science. I quickly developed a love for volunteering, and although I've been at SRS for just over a year, this is the perfect way to change someone's life through outreach. My favorite part of today was watching the girls come in a bit shy, but as the day progressed, their personalities began to shine. When girls see female volunteers, it shows them they can achieve anything they set their minds to."

"This event was surprising, productive and full of unexpected moments," said Paisleigh Hill from Highland Springs Middle School. "Robotics has opened my eyes to a future where I can make a positive impact on society. It felt nice knowing that the women making a difference at SRS are here today, teaching us everything they know about STEM."

Click [here](#) to watch a highlight video on the program.

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.

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