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**For Immediate Release**

## **Savannah River Site Hosts “STEM Like a Girl” Event for Local Students**

*Empowering Girls to Pursue Careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math*

**AIKEN, S.C.** – (October 31, 2023) – On Oct. 21, more than 60 eighth grade students from schools across the Central Savannah River Area participated in the Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS)-sponsored “Introduce a Girl to Engineering--STEM Like a Girl” event in celebration of [Nuclear Science Week](#).

Held at the [Ruth Patrick Science Education Center](#), the all-girl event connected students with 50 volunteers from across the Savannah River Site (SRS). Participants explored science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) career paths through industry-specific activities.



*Two area students experiment with graphite and electrical conductivity, much like electrical engineers, during “STEM Like a Girl” held at the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center in Aiken S.C.*

“At SRNS, females make up around 20% of our engineering workforce and 31% of our IT professionals,” said Taylor Rice, SRNS Education Outreach Specialist. “This event is one way SRNS aims to create new

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perspectives and innovative ideas at our Site, break gender barriers and introduce new opportunities to female students who've shown interest in these fields.”

Split into three groups, the girls participated in female-led activities that included coding practice, design, electrical, civil and mechanical engineering, building techniques, and robotics. Participants also watched engineering come alive during the DuPont Planetarium show.

Savannah River National Laboratory Analytical Chemist Katy Broadwater volunteered to lead activities you can't always find in a traditional classroom setting.

“My job does not stop when I clock out of work,” said Broadwater. “Volunteering gives me the opportunity to get out in the community and advocate for the Savannah River Site--an organization that supports safety, creativity, innovative ideas and job growth for all. I will always encourage girls to take the leap into a very attainable STEM career and I hope to have inspired at least one student today.”

Braelin Elmore, an eighth-grade student at Scofield Middle School was surprised to see what the event was all about.

“I felt very special and seen to be one of the two girls invited from my school,” said Elmore. “I am considering a career in STEM after the building activity, which allowed our group to become engineers tasked with creating the strongest structure. It felt like art; bringing together our creative ideas into one.”



Three SRS volunteers test the impact of structures built by student participants during the mechanical and civil engineering building contest.

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Sinclair Candrea, Advanced Engineering Mechanical Engineer at SRS, believes the exposure to women in the field is incredible for this age group.

“Whether they go home today enjoying this field or not, we have created a lasting positive impression on their future,” said Candrea. “When I was in middle school, I was never exposed to these types of activities, and it took me until college to realize that I wanted to be a mechanical engineer. This event was a fun and interactive opportunity for the girls to see that they can be highly successful in a male-dominated field early on.”

“We couldn’t have accomplished this event without the help and dedication from the 50 volunteers who chose to spend their Saturday mentoring the next generation of our workforce and impacting the trajectory of their future,” said Rice. “The excitement seen on the faces of the girls today made it all worth it.”

Click [here](#) for more information about SRNS Education Outreach initiatives.



*Sixty-four eighth grade girls across the Central Savannah River Area sparked new interests in science, technology, engineering, and math careers when they attended the event sponsored by Savannah River Nuclear Solutions.*

*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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