

Local students gain experience in innovation at Summer Science Institute

Local African-American middle school students will attend a Summer Science Institute to experience innovation firsthand June 18-22 at Texas Instruments in Santa Clara.

TI is partnering with the Greene Scholars Program to offer the annual, hands-on learning event to create excitement about science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) among these 30 high-achieving, 11-to 14-year old African-American scholars.

Throughout the week the students will work directly with a team of TI engineers who volunteered their time and ideas for activities that explore innovation, product development, solar technology and sports science. In this collaborative team environment, these young scholars will conceptualize and develop their own innovative projects, and, at week's end, present a product idea based on what they learned. Hands-on activities including building towers using marshmallows and toothpicks, designing futuristic bike helmets, and building and racing solar cars will demonstrate concepts learned about innovation and product development. In addition to the interactive workshops, the students will participate in a "sports science challenge" at the company's fitness center and tour TI Silicon Valley Labs, as well as interact over lunch with the TI volunteers.

"Supporting quality STEM education is a top priority for TI, because we know that most students need solid math and science skills for their future career success. And the future of our company, community and society depend on building an effective K-12 and higher education ecosystem for innovation to thrive," said Dave Heacock, senior vice president and manager of TI's Silicon Valley Analog. "We're very pleased to host these talented young scholars, and TI will continue engaging with organizations like The Greene Scholars Program that help spark interest in science and engineering, especially among minorities and women who've traditionally been underrepresented in careers involving the STEM fields."

TI, which acquired National Semiconductor last September, continued the partnership with The Greene Scholars Program that Santa Clara site employees have been involved with for more than a decade. This year, the TI team of engineers enhanced the Summer Science Institute experience by incorporating a theme of innovation and developing a cohesive curriculum. "Students are fascinated by science and innovation when they can actively participate in discovery; the richer the experience, the more lasting the takeaway," said Gloria Whitaker-Daniels, program director of the Greene Scholars Program. "This unique opportunity for our children to work alongside TI's best and brightest engineers will not only motivate and challenge Greene Scholars, but will also capture the children's imagination of possibility. As students practice science and engineering in collaborative and interactive ways, the subject matter becomes relevant and fun, sparking the beginning of a lifelong interest."

To be selected as a Frank Greene Scholars, students apply, demonstrating interest and aptitude for STEM. Scholars and their parents participate in monthly meetings and year-round educational sessions that focus on STEM enrichment, character development, academic planning, and college and career planning.