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New Jersey STEM Month March 2023 Kicks Off

Chatham, NJ – On Wednesday, March 1, 2023, the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network (NJSPN) kicked off NJ STEM Month at the Princeton Innovation Center BioLabs. For the sixth year in a row, March has been recognized as NJ STEM Month as designated by gubernatorial [proclamation](#). NJ STEM Month is a celebration co-hosted by the NJSPN and its parent organization the Research & Development Council of New Jersey (R&D Council of NJ). The month highlights the Garden State’s incredible impact in science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) and innovation. The goal of NJ STEM Month 2023 is to impact 37,500 learners. Anyone hosting a NJ STEM Month event is encouraged to fill out the event tracker form [here](#).

60 STEM leaders from across the state attended the Kickoff event. Attendees had the opportunity to network and visit the representatives that were tabling from the following organizations: Brainy n Bright, Drop the Beet Farms, the Liberty Science Center, Students 2 Science, and The College of New Jersey’s School of Education. Attendees also walked away with STEM Month swag.

Keynote speaker Taylor Lee, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Security Officer of Leswee LLC, shared her inspirational story of how an extreme injury in high school helped her find her passion in the healthcare industry. She will be graduating at the end of this month with a Bachelors in Computer Science from the Colorado Technical University.

“NJ STEM Month is an amazing month where we get to elevate all of the incredible work done here in STEM in both education and the workforce,” said Kim Case, Executive Director of the R&D Council of NJ. “New Jersey is home to the most scientists and engineers per square mile in the country, along with bring ranked the #1 state in education by U.S. News, so we have a lot to celebrate when it comes to STEM.”

The event also recognized one of NJ STEM Month’s flagship programs, its mini-grant initiative.

Each STEM Month grants of up to \$500 are awarded to support March STEM events across the state. Jeannine Lanphear, Supervisor of Math and Science Grades 5-8 in North Brunswick Township Public Schools and a 2022 mini-grant recipient, was invited to speak about how she used the funds to host an aquaponics workshop and create aquaponics take-home kits for her students. Given the success of that workshop, she was able to receive federal education funding to start an aquaponics club at Linwood School with the help of Cody Parker, founder of Drop the Beet Farms. A video of the aquaponics program can be seen [here](#).

In 2023, over \$24,000 has been awarded in mini-grants. The mini-grants were supported by grants from the Overdeck Family Foundation and Comcast. Through these mini-grants, close to 14,000 learners will be impacted. Examples of this year's mini-grant events include: a Latinas in STEM conference, a LEGO Master Challenge, and a Mad Scientist event.

The Kickoff closed with the announcement of the 2023 NJ STEM Month award winners. These awards are open to all stakeholders responsible for learning, advocacy and leadership in the state, including: schools, higher education institutions, nonprofit organizations, businesses, etc. Below are this year's NJ STEM Month award winners!

- **STEM Advocate of the Year:** New Jersey Technology and Engineering Educators Association (NJTEEA)
- **STEM Civic Leadership Award:** Reeti Rout, President at WeMake 4-H
- **STEM Collaboration of the Year:** Governor's STEM Scholar Social Cyber Forensics Lab (Governor's STEM Scholars and Network Contagion Research Institute)
- **STEM Educator of the Year:** Krystina Valdes, Science Teacher at North Brunswick Township Middle School
- **STEM Corporate Champion of the Year:** Allan Croly of Lockheed Martin

The NJSPN was created in 2014 and is managed by the Research & Development Council for New Jersey. It includes over 700 STEM leaders from across the State and connects all STEM stakeholders-K-12, higher education, non-profit, informal providers, business, philanthropists and government. NJSPN has six STEM learning ecosystems as part of an international network of ecosystems supported by the STEM Funders' Network. You can learn more about the Jersey STEM Pathways Network, New Jersey's STEM Ecosystems, and NJ STEM Month by visiting

www.njstempathways.org.