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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Jersey STEM Month March 2024 Kicks Off

New Jersey Celebrates Seven Years of STEM Excellence with NJ STEM Month 2024!

Chatham, NJ – On Friday, March 1, 2024, the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network (NJSPN) kicked off NJ STEM Month at the Princeton Innovation Center BioLabs. For the seventh year in a row, March is 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 tremendous impact in science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) and innovation. The goal of NJ STEM Month 2024 is to impact 40,000 learners. Anyone hosting a NJ STEM Month event is encouraged to add it to the NJSPN's website calendar using this form.

The kickoff event drew 80 STEM leaders from diverse organizations across the state to the Princeton Innovation Center BioLabs. The Kickoff commenced with a reading of the 2024 Gubernatorial Proclamation read via video by students from Jose Marti STEM Academy located in Union City. Attendees had the opportunity to network and visit the representatives that were tabling from the following organizations: Girls Who Code, Students 2 Science, The College of New Jersey's School of Education and Yard Sciences. Attendees also walked away with STEM Month swag bags.

Laura Norkute, Director of Water Quality and Environmental Compliance at New Jersey American Water, delivered a keynote address titled "Connecting to Succeed," which emphasized the significance of fostering relationships for professional growth. She shared her personal experiences from being in the STEM industry and the importance of mentorship.

"We are ecstatic to be in our seventh year celebrating New Jersey STEM Month in the month of March. NJ STEM Month has impacted over 100,000 learners over the years and we are eager to continue to expand its reach and get more learners of all ages excited about and engaged with STEM."

said Kim Case, Executive Director of the R&D Council of NJ and New Jersey STEM Pathways Network Manager. "We thank Governor Murphy and New Jersey legislators for being so supportive of this initiative. We look forward to our STEM Showcase at the New Jersey State House on March 18!"

The event also recognized the success of NJ STEM Month's mini-grant initiative, which awards grants of up to $500 to support STEM events throughout March. In 2024, a total of $34,276 in mini-grants were distributed, benefiting over 34,000 learners across all 21 counties. Generous support from the Overdeck Family Foundation, Comcast, and American Water made these grants possible.

The Kickoff closed with the announcement of the 2024 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:** Makeba Green, International Girls Academy
- **STEM Corporate Champion of the Year:** Puratos
- **STEM Civic Leadership Award:** New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program
- **STEM Collaboration of the Year:** Federal Aviation Administration William J Hughes Technical Center (FAAWJHTC) Aviation STEM Program, FAAWJHTC Airport Technology Branch, Naval Air Station Wildwood Museum and Cape May Airport
- **STEM Educator of the Year:** Christopher Kunkel, Hoboken Charter School

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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 seven 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.