Baldwin Park Middle School Empowers Female Students through Femineers

BALDWIN PARK – Female students at Baldwin Park Unified's Holland Middle School will soon learn how to create and program robots through an after-school program funded by a grant from Cal Poly Pomona's Adopt-a-Femineer School Program.

The one-year grant, awarded by Cal Poly Pomona's College of Engineering, includes 12 robotics kits, 24 tool bags and Femineer sweatshirts for 24 students to participate in the 30-hour program.

"Creating opportunities for women in STEM is becoming one of the fastest-growing career pathways and we are excited to open up more possibilities for our students," Holland Principal Mike Rust said. "Through this program we can help our students gain the confidence to chase their goals."

The Femineer program, launched in 2013, operates on a three-year cycle. This year, the program focuses on creative robotics, teaching girls in sixth through eighth grades the fundamentals of electronics, including how to design robots from everyday materials.

The students and their Femineer teacher will also attend the college's annual Femineer Summit in spring 2018, where students will showcase their completed robotic creations.

Corinne Macias, a seventh- and eighth-grade science and Project Lead the Way medical detective teacher at Holland, will lead the Femineers. She will attend a three-day workshop on the curriculum at the end of this month.

"This program will allow our students to make their visions a reality," Macias said. "I believe the Femineer program will help motivate and embolden them to know that there are many opportunities in STEM fields."

Rust hopes to offer the second-year course – wearable technology – for the 2018-19 school year.

"The Femineer program has the power to change the lives of these girls," Superintendent Dr. Froilan N. Mendoza said. "It is an honor to partner with Cal Poly Pomona in such a meaningful way."

The College of Engineering first offered the Femineer grants in 2016. This year, six schools received the grants. Schools can reapply each year for the grant to help implement the course curriculums.

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