



AZUSA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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Azusa High Femineers Sharpen Their STEM Skills in Project-Based Learning Club

Azusa, CA - Azusa High School 10th-grader Isabel Noriega studied her miniature carousel design, trying to determine what was keeping it from spinning around. Noriega suspected it was a problem with her circuit board, or possibly a miscalculation in the design process.

Noriega is one of a dozen Azusa High students in the inaugural Femineers program, an all-girl after-school technology club that seeks to inspire females to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. Azusa High recently launched the three-year mentorship program through a partnership with Cal Poly Pomona's College of Engineering.

"The Femineers are a group of highly motivated and imaginative students who are focused on college and career," Azusa High chemistry teacher Laura Banks said. "The Femineers Program allows them the space to develop, construct and program their own designs, work together in teams and solve problems on their own."

Introduced in January, the Femineers meet twice a week to learn the basics of technology, electronics, and computer coding, working with Azusa High science advisors to complete STEM-related projects such as creative robots and wearable technology.

For their latest assignment, the Femineers were tasked with creating a motorized carousel of a Ferris wheel, with the freedom to add their own creative touches. Under the tutelage of Laura Banks and Azusa High science teacher Chuen Ng, the girls work individually or in teams.

Azusa High 10th-grader Sahiba Lidhar worked with her teammates to create a Ferris wheel with programmed music and lights. Lidhar jumped at the chance to be a Femineer because of the unique opportunities it provides her to increase her STEM knowledge and skills, which she would like to take to an elite university like Stanford.

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"I want to be a doctor, which requires great knowledge of STEM curriculum," Lidhar said.

Similarly, Azusa High 11th-grader Frances Fitzgerald was drawn to the club for the chance to enhance her knowledge of environmental science.

"I want to study chemistry and climate change and what I am learning in the Femineers, like computer coding, gets me one step closer to my goal," Fitzgerald said.

On April 7 Cal Poly Pomona will host the Femineer Summit, where students from all participating schools will meet to display their engineering projects, talk with students from the School of Engineering, and attend a panel discussion featuring industry professionals and high school student leaders.

"Azusa Unified is committed to providing opportunities for all students, especially our girls, to engage in project-based learning programs, particularly in STEM," Superintendent Dr. Linda Kaminski said. "The Femineers is an excellent program that emphasizes critical thinking and collaborative learning while providing our female students the skills needed to compete for in-demand careers."

Photo:

AZUSA_HIGH_FEMINEERS1: Azusa High School Femineers put the finishing touches on a motorized carousel. Seeking to inspire more women to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, the Femineers meet after school twice a week to learn the basics of technology, electronics, and computer coding. The Femineers is an Azusa High partnership with the Cal Poly Pomona School of Engineering.

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