

## PRESS RELEASE

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## Fremont Femeiners Empowers Female Students to Explore STEM Careers

Project Lead The Way to chronicle their success in new documentary

**POMONA** – A group of female students at the Fremont Academy of Engineering and Design are breaking through barriers and embracing career paths in science, technology, engineering and math – helping to lead the next generation of women into STEM careers.

Known as the Fremont Femeiners, the group consists of 24 girls in grades 10 and 11 – the top students in their class – who engage in hands-on STEM activities, including robotics and wearable technology.

“I’ve heard many times that STEM is not for girls, but they’re wrong,” said Elena Guzman, an 11th-grader and president of the Femeiners. “These girls are smart and do amazing projects, and we were chosen because we’re full of potential. I think we’re a great group of girls who are going to do great things.”

The Fremont Academy of Engineering and Design is a grade seven to 12 Project Lead The Way (PLTW) school composed of an equal number of boys and girls, all of whom take engineering classes.

The Femeiners was created in 2013 in partnership with Cal Poly Pomona’s College of Engineering and is guided by the belief that girls will thrive in STEM careers if they are given the opportunity. The College, which has an 18 percent female enrollment, supplies the funding and academic support to sustain the three-year program.

The program provides students project-based learning, female engineering student mentors and college counseling while building a sustainable community of current and future STEM leaders. They are now the subject of a PLTW documentary.

“The Femeiners are treading ground in what has historically been a male-dominated industry,” said Fremont engineering and computer science teacher Scott Lukesh, who runs the program and was recently recognized by PLTW for his commitment to being a master teacher. “It’s a field that we can change. It’s a difficult thing to do, but there’s no stopping this revolution, and I believe the Femeiners can make a real impact at Fremont, Cal Poly and beyond.”

This month, Cal Poly Pomona engineering professors and female engineering students are bringing their expertise to lead the Femeiners in building wearable technology. This new industry incorporates

computer and advanced electronic technologies into clothing and accessories with the vision of weaving technology into everyday life. Last year, Cal Poly and the Femeineers built creative robots.

A Femeineer Excursion to Lake Arrowhead is planned for Jan. 28-30 to complete wearable technology projects and build a strong community amongst themselves.

“I want these girls to be empowered to know that they can do anything they set their minds to,” said Lukesh, a 25-year educator. “We need to have projects like this to show girls and their families that they’re good at it. The world needs them.”

Guzman, who has been at Fremont since seventh grade, said she loves the challenge of learning new concepts, including digital electronics and circuit boards.

“The trial and error aspect of engineering energizes me and makes me excited for what we’re going to learn in class the next day,” she said. “This program helps me to see that I have so many choices and I can achieve at any of them.”

Guzman and her peers have previously presented projects at PLTW conferences at Cal Poly and San Diego State University. The students will soon travel to Sacramento to showcase their work at a state PLTW conference.

“The Femeineers program has the amazing capability of changing the dynamic of the STEM field,” said PUSD Superintendent Richard Martinez. “It’s a unique pathway that provides innumerable opportunities for these accomplished young women, who are already trailblazers in the STEM world, to learn the concepts, develop the skills and build the confidence to be successful after high school.”

For more information on the Femeineers, visit [www.facebook.com/fremontfemeineers](http://www.facebook.com/fremontfemeineers).

#### **PHOTO CAPTION:**

**FEMINEERS:** A group of Fremont Academy students, called the Femeineers, learn how to build wearable technology from Cal Poly engineering professors and female engineering students.

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