

2019 EXELON FOUNDATION STEM INNOVATION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Exelon has made it a mission to help close the gender gap in STEM fields by focusing on women's development and gender diversity. The Exelon Foundation partnered with Exelon and the United Nations HeForShe Initiative to educate and encourage young women interested in STEM. In addition to STEM programs and activities throughout the academic year, Exelon created the STEM Innovation and Leadership academy - a six-day overnight college-like program meant to mimic a college experience for high school women. NEED is proud to partner in executing this amazing initiative with Exelon and the Exelon Foundation

The academy is a free camp experience held at a local university that gives young women more opportunity to learn about energy and STEM. In 2018, there were two STEM academies – one in Washington, D.C./Maryland and the other in Chicago, IL. This past summer, Philadelphia was added as a third academy location. Those accepted through an application process engage in fun, interactive field trips, energy industry site visits, keynote speakers, women's leadership panels, Q&A sessions and networking with executives in the industry. Additionally, the girls work on a STEM challenge throughout the week and present to a judging panel on the last day.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Exelon Foundation, most female high school students understand the severity of climate change and four out of five agree that action needs to be taken. However, while teen girls believe their actions can impact climate change, most don't feel prepared to deal with these issues. Those surveyed feel confident women possess the skills needed to tackle climate change issues, but only 50% foresee women as leading the effort to do so, and even fewer anticipate job openings for women in the field. In an effort to increase female interest in STEM and illuminate the many career opportunities available to them, the focus of each academy this summer was on the global climate crisis.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK, MD

First up, running July 14-19, the Academy took place at the University of Maryland, College Park with 59 participants. Radiah Rhodes with EvokLife provided young women with an inspirational session about leadership. They also each received a copy of her new book, *Being is the New Doing: A Divine Guide to Owning Your Energy, Time and Peace of Mind*. Additional leadership sessions and all-female executive panel discussions were provided throughout the week. Field trips during the UMD College Park Academy included a tour of Exelon Headquarters in Baltimore, Baltimore Gas & Electric Training Center in White Marsh, MD, Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Generation Facility in Calverly County, MD, and Pepco's Watershed House.

ABC7 visited and shared this [video](#), check it out!

DREXEL UNIVERSITY, PHILADELPHIA, PA

The second STEM Academy of the summer took place at Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA from July 21-26 with 62 girls participating. Radiah Rhodes also came to Philadelphia to chat with the girls about leadership. Field trips included exploring the Muddy Run Observatory with Rittenhouse Astronomical Society, learning about hydropower and electricity at both Muddy Run Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Plant and Conowingo Hydroelectric Plant, and delving into nuclear energy while at Limerick Generating Station.

Some of the guest speakers included Coralie Adam with KinetX Aerospace, HeForShe Champions Program Manager, Dinal Limbachia, HeForShe Program Manager Edward Wageni, Chief Astronomer for the Franklin Institute, Derrick Pitts, and Tomeka Lee and Jennifer Thompson, the co-founders of TriZen. A women's leadership panel consisting of Susan Davis, Chief Sustainability Officer at Comcast, Kim Fraites-Dow with Girl Scouts, Farah Jimenez with Philadelphia Education Fund, and Cheekeema Fulmore-Townsend with Philadelphia Youth Network engaged in a Q&A session with the girls. Maggie FitzPatrick, Senior Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Philanthropy and Customer Engagement came from Washington to share her own story and interview Chris Crane, the president and CEO of Exelon, who traveled in from Exelon's headquarters in Chicago.

Brief [article](#) from *The Pottstown Post*, [videoclip](#) from *NBC Philadelphia*, and a [videoclip](#) from *Philly Fox 29*.

ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, CHICAGO, IL

Wrapping up the summer, 59 female students participated in the academy at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, IL from August 4-9. TriZen co-founder, Jennifer Thompkins, made the trip from Pennsylvania to share her advice on what it takes to be a successful leader in school, life and work. Field trips included an interactive tour at the ComEd Training Center and a nuclear presentation & tour at Braidwood Power Station.

Exelon president and CEO of Exelon, Chris Crane was interviewed by Maggie FitzPatrick, who oversees Exelon communications, brand strategy, and customer engagement. This was a great opportunity for the girls to hear what makes these two tick and how they are thinking about the future of the industry. Next, the girls learned about energy at IIT by visiting the Galvin Center with host Hamid Araastropour, Director of the Wanger Institute for Sustainability and Energy Research (WISER). Since the students were staying at Kaplan Institute, they engaged in a leadership and innovation discussion with Howard Tullman, Kaplan Institute's Executive Director. Great leadership and learning discussions continued with Bill Von Hoene, Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer for Exelon.

The Chicago Shakespeare Theater hosted a reception with Exelon Executives and the girls to participate in a leadership panel with PhD President and CEO of Shedd Aquarium, Bridget Coughlin, Deputy Governor of IL, Sol Flores, Cook County President, Toni Preckwinkle, and President of Heartland Alliance, Evelyn Diaz.

Check out the Chicago Citizen news [article](#), plus video of Fox32 Chicago [interview](#) with President of the Exelon Foundation, Steve Solomon, and two STEM Academy students Brittany Mack and Emma Mendez.



Each STEM Academy also incorporated hands-on energy activities and a sustainability and climate focused challenge project. The project required each group take steps to reduce the campus' carbon footprint. Each group was tasked with redesigning the sustainability goals for students and faculty and to develop a Net Zero plan for an assigned building on campus. Each group of young women toured the campus with an energy auditor to learn how their assigned building works, while considering ways to make it more efficient and to think about how they may incorporate renewable energy systems on site. As part of the STEM Challenge, the girls were to create a Net Zero Plan and to help with this, Charles Hendricks with The Gaines Group, came to share his expertise on what a Net Zero Building entails. Each academy student received an iPad to keep and utilized various apps such as iMovie, Educreation Interactive Whiteboard, Appy Pie, Google's VR Tour Creator, and UMake. In addition to field trips and guest speakers in prominent STEM leadership roles, the students participated in teambuilding and energy related games and icebreakers throughout the week.

The NEED Project's mission is to promote an energy conscious and educated society by creating effective networks of students, educators, business, government and community leaders to design and deliver objective, multi-sided energy education programs. We were honored to partner yet again with the Exelon Foundation to be a part of the STEM Innovation Leadership Academies!

Photos from each academy: <https://need-media.smugmug.com/ExelonSTEMAcademy>

STEM
innovation +
leadership academy

Exelon Foundation.

 **HeForShe**