



NEWS RELEASE

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Northridge Middle School Students Learn About Renewable Natural Gas Through Hands-On Activities with SoCalGas Engineers, Great Minds in STEM and College Scholars

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 26, 2018—To inspire students in underserved communities to take interest in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), [Southern California Gas Co.](#) (SoCalGas) and [Great Minds in STEM](#) (GMiS) today teamed up to lead science activities for about 100 sixth graders at Northridge Middle School. During the program, which was created by GMiS, SoCalGas engineers and local college students assisted the middle schoolers with hands-on projects that taught them lessons in renewable natural gas (RNG) and civil engineering. Photos of the event are available [here](#).

Participants explored a variety of scientific and technical concepts, including how RNG can be made from food waste. They extracted and purified compounds from strawberries to help them understand how various components can be created when organic materials biodegrade. They also applied civil engineering principles through an activity of constructing three-foot domes with everyday materials. Winners for this challenge were determined by which structures could hold the most weight.

“This program shows young people how exciting the STEM fields can be and how we can use these concepts to help solve big challenges,” said Jimmie Cho, senior vice president of gas engineering and distribution operations at SoCalGas. “For example, by capturing methane emissions from farm operations and landfills, we can create renewable natural gas that can help meet California’s energy needs.”

“This was an awesome opportunity for Northridge Middle School that was made possible thanks to the generous support of SoCalGas and GMiS,” said Richard Ramos, the school’s principal. “Through this program we hope to incubate students to pursue studies in STEM education and future careers.”

“Kids love participating in Viva Technology Student Day because they get to apply STEM concepts during fun activities and friendly team competitions,” said Roberto Ornelas, senior coordinator of education programs for GMiS. “They always come out with renewed engagement for STEM subjects and cannot wait to come back into the classroom to learn more.”

The program additionally included raffle drawing of educational toys and games for the students.

About SoCalGas

Headquartered in Los Angeles, [SoCalGas®](#) is the [largest natural gas distribution utility](#) in the United States, providing clean, safe, affordable and reliable natural gas service to 21.7 million customers in Central and Southern California. Its service territory spans [22,000 square miles](#) from Fresno to the Mexican border, reaching more than [550 communities](#) through 5.9 million meters and 101,000 miles of pipeline. More than 90 percent of Southern California single-family home residents use natural gas for home heat and hot water. In addition, natural gas plays a key role in providing electricity to Californians—about [60 percent of electric power generated](#) in the state comes from gas-fired power plants.

SoCalGas has served communities in California [for 150 years](#) and is committed to being a leader in the region's clean energy future. The company is working to accelerate the use of [renewable natural gas](#), a carbon-neutral or carbon-negative fuel created by capturing and conditioning greenhouse gas emissions from farms, landfills and wastewater treatment plants. SoCalGas is a subsidiary of [Sempra Energy](#) (NYSE: SRE), a Fortune 500 energy services holding company based in San Diego. For more information visit socalgas.com/newsroom or connect with SoCalGas on [Twitter](#) (@SoCalGas), [Instagram](#) (@SoCalGas) and [Facebook](#).

About Great Minds in STEM

Great Minds in STEM™ is a national 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles County with a 30-year history of keeping America technologically strong through the delivery of national STEM awareness programs for students, parents and teachers in underserved communities. Through the GMiS network, academic, career development and mentoring opportunities are offered to students who are underrepresented in STEM fields. The organization is focused on working to build a diverse 21st Century STEM workforce in which all citizens contribute to innovation and experience prosperity.

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