

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Monica Villafaña, Esq.  
Director of Professional Programs  
Great Minds in STEM  
(323) 262-0997 Ext. 103(O)  
mvillafana@greatmindsinstem.org

**Great Minds in STEM™ Named a “Bright Spot in Hispanic Education” by  
White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**  
*Recognizing Department of Defense Spearheaded STEM-Up™ Initiative*

*Monterey Park, CA, September 15, 2015* – Great Minds in STEM (GMiS) is honored to announce its recognition as a “Bright Spot in Hispanic Education” by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (WIEEH) for its leadership, dedication and steadfast commitment to the Hispanic/Latino community. In celebration of the Initiative’s Educational Excellence for Hispanics’ 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, GMiS and its STEM-Up™ Initiative will be part of the WIEEH’s first-ever Bright Spots in Hispanic Education National Online Catalog, which includes over 230 programs that invest in key education priorities for Hispanics/Latinos.

Spearheaded and funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, STEM-Up™ is a comprehensive community-centered initiative that provides an innovative solution to the projected shortage of America’s STEM workforce. Launched in 2009, STEM-Up is based in the Boyle Heights section of East Los Angeles and has provided year-round STEM programming to the over 92,000 students and residents of the local community. STEM-Up’s identification as a “Bright Spot” solidifies the over half-decade of progress it and its partner institutions in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and Partnership for Los Angeles Schools (PLAS) have made transforming Boyle Heights into a hub of STEM activity, both inside and outside of the classroom, and motivating and preparing more of its students to pursue degrees and careers in STEM. The STEM-Up™ Initiative has been administered and supported by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District, BEST and nCASE.

WIEEH seeks to leverage these Bright Spots to encourage collaboration between stakeholders focused on similar issues in sharing data-driven approaches, promising practices, peer advice, and effective partnerships, ultimately resulting in increased support for educational attachment of the Hispanic/Latino community, from cradle to career.

The announcement was made by Alexandra Ceja, Executive Director of the Initiative on September 15, 2015 at the launch of Hispanic Heritage Month in Washington, D.C. “There has been notable progress in Hispanic educational achievement,” said Ceja. “It is due to the efforts of these Bright Spots in Hispanic Education, programs and organizations working throughout the country to help Hispanic students reach their full potential.”

**About Great Minds in STEM™**

Great Minds in STEM™ is an education, national 501(c)3 nonprofit organization at the forefront of implementing innovative programs and partnerships focused on the continuous expansion of STEM education opportunities for our nation’s underserved communities. For more information on GMiS, please visit the Great Minds in STEM™ website at [www.greatmindsinstem.org](http://www.greatmindsinstem.org).