



# Mentoring Café gives middle schoolers taste of science

November 7, 2017

More than 100 eighth-grade students from Santa Fe Indian School received mentoring from scientists at the Laboratory's first STEM Mentoring Café at the Bradbury Science Museum.

"You are the future of the Laboratory, and we need you," said David Lyons, Lab executive director, as he addressed the students at the September 28 event. "We hope that after today you will consider a career in science and engineering, and bring your great minds to Los Alamos."

The middle-schoolers moved from mentor to mentor trying hands-on demonstrations, finding out how the scientists got their start and learning about their current work at the Laboratory.

"There aren't too many Native American engineers at the Lab," says mentor James Pecos, who is from Cochiti Pueblo. "I had guidance and support from older people when I was growing up, so I'm glad to pay that back and help the next generation."

"Working hands-on with the scientists is great for the students," says Clarice King, a teacher at Santa Fe Indian School. "They can see the range of people who work in STEM areas, and get to think that if these people are doing this, I could do it too."

## DOE national program guides event

After the mentoring session, Kelly Mitchell, special advisor at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), led the students in sharing what they'd learned about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) during the day.

As part of the program, Laboratory scientists and engineers received STEM role model training from Melinda Higgins, Science and Technology Policy Fellow at DOE.

"It is exciting to connect underrepresented communities with STEM professionals to communicate what they do. There is a real need to reach out to diverse populations to connect, inform and educate for the future of STEM, which is critically important to the DOE," says Higgins.

The [STEM Mentoring Café](#) is a national program from DOE aimed at inspiring historically underrepresented and underserved populations in STEM fields to consider those disciplines by engaging students in interactive demonstrations and show-and-tell chats with role models about their careers.

Native American scientist Denise Thronas, who was born at Ohkay Owingeh and still resides in the pueblo, shares the magic of chemistry with Santa Fe Indian School students at the Bradbury.

Students learning about the different wavelengths of visible light.

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