

April 2010

Dear Friend of Service Learning:

Much has been written about the decline in the last two decades in student interest and performance in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) related course work in high school. Among those students who do choose to pursue STEM coursework and careers, women and minority students continue to be under represented compared to the overall population.

Among the many promising initiatives to address this decline is STEM Service Learning, an instructional approach that provides students the opportunity to learn STEM content and concepts in the context of a service project solving critical issues facing communities. Integrating service learning into STEM courses can engage students and build interest in STEM-related careers and postsecondary study by making math and science content more relevant to students and their lives.

- *Students work with university students and the local utility to learn how to conduct energy audits at school sites, homes and local businesses resulting in decreased energy costs.*
- *High school students work with university engineering students and a retired industry mentor to design and teach a robotics class for elementary students in an after school program.*
- *High school students from chemistry, biology and environmental science classes work with graduate students and city officials to study the health of two drainage ponds and present the findings to the neighborhood association concerned about the issue.*

As your Regional Service-Learning Leads, We have many resources to help you investigate, plan and implement STEM service-learning in your schools. Below are a few of the resources about STEM Service Learning, as well as service-learning in general:

California STEM Service Learning Initiative

<http://www.calstem.org>

Engineering Projects in Community Service (EPICS)

<https://engineering.purdue.edu/EPICSHS/>

California Department of Education CalServe K-12 Service-Learning Initiative

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/sl/>

Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

<http://www.servicelearning.org/>

We are ready to help you effectively implement STEM service-learning programs to increase student engagement, interest and learning in science, technology, engineering and math coursework and career paths.

Sincerely,

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