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PEROT MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE LAUNCHES CONNECTEEN INITIATIVE TO EMPOWER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH IN-DEMAND STEM SKILLS

With a mission to help develop the 21st century STEM workforce, the pilot program – presented by Lockheed Martin – equips 10th and 11th grade students with the opportunities to flourish through mentorships with STEM industry professionals, workshops, university campus visits and more

DALLAS (May 24, 2022) – The Perot Museum of Nature and Science, in partnership with Lockheed Martin, is pleased to announce the launch of an educational and mentorship program – **ConnectTEEN** – to help combat the learning gap in North Texas and equip students with the tools to be knowledgeable, confident and motivated to pursue careers in STEM. In the United States, STEM jobs are expected to grow 10.5% between 2020 and 2030, and in Texas this number is even higher at almost 25%. Through programs such as this, the Perot Museum is committed to inspiring youth toward a lifelong love of science, in hopes of fostering one of the most talented and diverse STEM workforces in the country.

ConnectTEEN features monthly workshops as well as university campus and vocational school visits. Most importantly, with assistance from Lockheed Martin, the program offers mentor partnerships with industry professionals. Launched in January, the year-long pilot program gives high school students a remarkable opportunity to explore and deepen their interests and capabilities to flourish in STEM fields and prepares them with skills for the 21st century workforce.

“Real-life experience and exposure to industry professionals are of the utmost importance for these young people to achieve success,” said Dr. Linda Silver, Eugene McDermott Chief Executive Officer of the Perot Museum. “Each of these mentors in the STEM industry understands the rigors and rewards of the profession. We believe these personal relationships will boost the students’ confidence and foster a relationship with a trusted advisor when navigating higher education and future careers.”

The program received an overwhelming response from students and staff at Dallas ISD’s Innovation Design Entrepreneurship Academy (IDEA) at James W. Fannin. Additionally, Lockheed Martin fully embraced the program, providing thought leadership in building the curriculum as well as recruiting 25 employees as mentors – a higher number than expected – who represent diverse STEM careers and different backgrounds.

“At Lockheed Martin, we understand the important role that mentors play in the lives of young people,” said Scott Greene, executive vice president of Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. “The mentoring partnership that we now have with the Perot Museum of Nature and Science allows our Lockheed Martin professionals to directly connect with many young people in North Texas. Together with their mentors, these bright students will learn what it takes to be part of the next generation of engineers, scientists, technologists, mathematicians, and most of all, dreamers.”

The program kicked off with a parent-education orientation and a STEM career immersion program for students. On March 4, students experienced the first of multiple monthly workshops, engagingly led by local university and business professionals. The topics focused on workforce development, college preparation, financial literacy, inclusivity in STEM, trade industries and more.

This year, students and mentors will visit local campuses including the University of Texas at Arlington and Texas Woman's University, and they'll travel this summer to some of the state's top public STEM institutions, including Texas Tech University, Texas A&M University and the University of Texas. The program will also host tours of trade and technical schools, including Dallas College's Mountain View Campus, which offer a wealth of degree programs that lead to well-paying STEM careers.

Summer continues with intense STEM exploration of fundamental skills training, career visualization – beyond the stereotypical medical and engineer fields – and additional parent education to enlighten and address misconceptions regarding college applications and financial aid, paid vocational programs and other available resources.

After gaining valuable experiences, knowledge and relationships throughout the year, students will conclude the program in December, presenting at a culminating symposium.

"I am so thankful for our partners at Lockheed Martin and IDEA, who are committed to these students' futures," said Jessica Chavez, Chief Learning Officer at the Perot Museum. "Although this year is a pilot program, our hope is to really grow this program, and our goal is for 100% of these students to attend higher education and 75% to pursue a career in STEM."

"As a transformation high school in Dallas ISD, the ConnecTEEN program at the Perot Museum has been an ideal partnership for our students. Allowing our students to learn more about STEM careers while also giving them valuable information on how to navigate the college process has opened so many possibilities," said Raymie Venable, principal of IDEA. "The ConnecTEEN program has ensured that our students that represent a diverse selection of our community are aware of the possibilities before them as they navigate their post-secondary choices. We are eternally grateful to partner with the Perot Museum to offer this once in a lifetime program to our high school students."

Plans are underway for next year's program, which will launch Fall 2022.

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About the Perot Museum of Nature and Science. *A top cultural attraction in Dallas/Fort Worth and a Michelin Green Guide three-star destination, the Perot Museum of Nature and Science is a nonprofit educational organization located in the heart of Dallas, Texas. With a mission to inspire minds through nature and science, the Perot Museum delivers exciting, engaging and innovative visitor and outreach experiences through its education, exhibition, and research and collections programming for children, students, teachers, families and life-long learners. A trusted science resource for all of North Texas, the Museum is committed to preparing the next generation of STEM workers by supporting K-12 schools and educators through highly accessible programs. The 180,000-square-foot facility in Victory Park opened in December 2012 and is now recognized as the symbolic gateway to the Dallas Arts District. Future scientists, mathematicians and engineers will find inspiration and enlightenment through 11 permanent exhibit halls on five floors of public space; a children's museum; a flexible-space, traveling exhibition hall; and a theater. Designed by 2005 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate Thom Mayne and his firm Morphosis Architects, the Victory Park museum has been lauded for its artistry and sustainability. To learn more, please visit perotmuseum.org.*

About Lockheed Martin. *Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, Lockheed Martin Corporation is a global security and aerospace company that employs approximately 114,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.*

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