Change the Equation Partners with Science Foundation Arizona for its STEMworks Database Program

Phoenix Organization Leads First-ever Pilot; Four Programs Recognized

PHOENIX (July 24, 2014) – Change the Equation (CTEq), a national nonprofit, nonpartisan, education organization that works at the intersection of business and education to ensure that all students are science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) literate, recently partnered with Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz) to help roll out its new AZ STEMworks Database pilot program. STEMworks is Change the Equation’s database of programs that meet rigorous Design Principles for effectiveness in STEM education.

In its inaugural year in Arizona, the program recognizes Arizona programs that are among the nation’s top STEM education initiatives and aims to rally the state’s entire STEM education community around elevating quality standards for STEM programs.

Working with Washington, DC-based CTEq, SFAz is helping educators, business leaders and other funders identify and support promising educational programs in the state through STEM teaching and learning experiences to bring to focus Arizona STEM education programs.

“SFAz is proud to partner with CTEq in piloting the STEMworks database in Arizona,” said Len Fine, SFAz Fellow. “As the first state in the country to pilot this program, we are confident that the rigorous review process will set the standard to increase the quality and impact of STEM education programs throughout the state.”

SFAz provided its team’s external oversight expertise to evaluate Arizona STEM education programs against CTEq’s rigorous Design Principles. With SFAz’s expertise, two Arizona STEM programs were selected as among the nation’s best and earned a coveted place in CTEq’s STEMworks database:

- **The Power of Data Project**, a Northern Arizona University program, brings teams of Arizona high school math, science and career/technical teachers together to analyze spatial data using geospatial technologies to propose solutions to authentic local problems. They then implement the same lessons in their schools.

- **The Champions for Change** program from Blue Marble Institute serves 5th through 9th grade students using the appeal of world-renowned champions and explorers to engage youth in science, language, arts, innovative technology, engineering and design and math. The program aims to make science and other content more relevant to the lives of youth through compelling hands-on projects. The program has been implanted in 33 districts, charter and private schools.
In addition, SFAz worked in partnership to design and test a new strategy for selecting Promising Programs that, with further development, could take their place alongside the nation’s best. The two Promising Programs selected will have three years to reach the standard of full-fledged STEMworks programs. They include:

- **The Water Investigations Program** from the University of Arizona aims to improve the critical thinking skills of 6th through 12th graders by encouraging them to inquire, collaborate, solve problems and synthesize evidence. Teachers receive extensive professional development, materials and support for helping their students design and conduct their own investigation at an Arizona river. WIP students grasp engineering as they apply science and mathematics to solve real-world problems like reducing water use at school and at home.

- **CompuGirls** is a project-based program from Arizona State University that helps girls both in and out of school, manipulate the latest technologies in digital media, game development and virtual worlds to improve their communities. Carefully trained mentor teachers help each girl design a research project around a self-identified community issue. Multimedia (e.g. iLife, SCRATCH, Joykadia) becomes a means to describe, analyze and share their results.

The partnership between CTEq and SFAz aims to rally the entire STEM education community to improve standards and quality for STEM education. With more than 500 providers of STEM programs in Arizona, SFAz will work with STEM program designers throughout the state to help them meet the high bar set by the Design Principles. CTEq’s collaboration with SFAz will be a model for efforts in other states to also increase the quality and impact of STEM education programs.

“There are surely thousands of STEM programs in the United States,” said Linda Rosen, CEO of CTEq. “At a time when we need all the STEM talent we can get, this is good news. Yet without a broad movement to improve their effectiveness, they will never reach their potential.”

STEMworks is accepting new applications through September 12, 2014 and selected programs will be announced in the first quarter of 2015.

**About Science Foundation Arizona**
Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization initiated in 2006 by the Greater Phoenix Leadership Inc., Southern Arizona Leadership Council and the Flagstaff Forty in conjunction with the executive and legislative branches of state government. SFAz serves as a catalyst for high-wage, knowledge-based jobs and economic diversity through administration and strict oversight of research, development and education grants to public education and other non-profit research performing institutions. For more information, visit [www.sfaz.org](http://www.sfaz.org).

**About Change the Equation**
Change the Equation works at the intersection of business and education to ensure that all students are STEM literate by collaborating with schools, communities, and states to adopt and implement excellent STEM policies and programs. CTEq’s corporate members are deeply committed to ensuring more rigorous STEM learning for all PreK-12 students. STEM literacy opens doors to employment in every industry, sector, and profession, not just in traditional STEM fields – from entry-level jobs that require a certificate or associates’ degree to jobs in the C-Suite. For more information visit [www.changetheequation.org](http://www.changetheequation.org).

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