

PROJECT EXPLORATION

CHANGING THE FACE OF SCIENCE



ABOUT US

Project Exploration is a nonprofit science education organization that works to ensure communities traditionally overlooked by science—particularly minority youth and girls—have access to personalized experiences with science and scientists.

Founded by Dr. Paul Sereno and Gabrielle Lyon, Project Exploration seeks to expand access to science. We provide a new model for engaging and retaining today's youth in science: we **GET** students interested in science, **KEEP** them interested, and **EQUIP** them with what they need to pursue science. We accomplish this through:

- Interaction and collaboration with scientists.
- Long-term relationships with students.
- Hands-on experiences and fieldwork.
- Year-round youth development activities.
- Reading, writing, and public speaking.
- Advanced science and leadership opportunities.

ISSUES WE ADDRESS

Project Exploration believes after-school and summer science programs are essential for combating several persistent trends in science education:

- Participation and achievement in science by minority youth and girls remains remarkably low despite decades of science education programs aimed at leveling the playing field.
- Two-thirds of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities.
- Science in school is necessary but not sufficient to engage and support students' involvement in science.

Project Exploration is at the forefront of the burgeoning field of science in out-of-school time, seizing after-school, weekend, and summer opportunities to engage young people's sense of wonder and curiosity. Project Exploration raises awareness in the field about the issue of under-representation of specific groups in science and advocates for removal of barriers in order to make science accessible to all students.

OUR IMPACT

The results of our recent 10-year retrospective study demonstrate that Project Exploration students are significantly more likely than their peers to graduate from high school, go to college, and major in science; and they attribute their persistence in science and education to their Project Exploration experience.

- 95% of students have graduated or are on track to graduate;
- 50% of these students are enrolled in a four-year institution or have already graduated;
- 60% are pursuing or have already received degrees in science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM);
- 32% surveyed hold science-related employment.

Alumni from our programs tell us:

"Project Exploration is the reason I'm in Montana, in college, and majoring in geology. Before, I didn't have an interest or passion." – *Andres, age 21*

"I am a stronger human being because Project Exploration gave me the foundation and the inspiration to be better than I was when I started." – *Shureice, age 21*

"I think I have a future in science. Before Project Exploration, I didn't really think much about it." – *Hassan, age 17*

"If it weren't for Project Exploration, I wouldn't believe in the capabilities I have." – *Tanya, age 14*



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YOUTH PROGRAMS

At the heart of our work are youth programs, which allow students to explore a variety of scientific disciplines alongside scientists. Project Exploration targets students who are open-minded and curious, regardless of academic standing. All of our youth programs are free, eliminating the cost barrier that prevents low-income students from accessing dynamic out-of-school time science programs. Project Exploration works with more than 250 Chicago Public School students each year.

- Services for Girls include *Sisters4Science*, *All Girls Expedition*, and the annual *Girls' Health and Science Day* conference; 70% of Project Exploration participants are female.
- *Junior Paleontologists* is a three-week summer immersion into the world of paleontology.
- *Science Giants* trains high-school students to serve as docents to the public at science exhibits.
- All students are provided with ongoing science and leadership opportunities year-round.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Project Exploration reaches its most diverse and broad audience online and through traveling exhibits.

- *Discover Your Summer* is a resource guide to summer science programs across the Midwest, available for free in both print and online forms.
- More than 10,000 visitors per month visit our web site, which offers information for science enthusiasts, opportunities to connect with others who care about science, and online expeditions that provide a window into science in action.
- Project Exploration supports its mission by renting traveling exhibits and selling replica dinosaur skeletons that have been seen by over two million people around the world.

GET INVOLVED!

- **Join our mailing list**
www.projectexploration.org
- **Make a donation**
Help us deliver our free programs to hundreds of students each year.
www.projectexploration.org/support
- **Discover Your Summer**
Browse more than 175 summer science opportunities in the Midwest.
www.projectexploration.org/dys
- **Subscribe to our blog**
Read the stories behind the science from students, scientists, and staff.
www.projectexploration.org/blog
- **Follow us on Twitter**
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