

## *Annual conference encourages young women to pursue technical careers*

Marie Curie discovered radioactivity and won two Nobel Prizes. Rosalind Franklin played an instrumental part in determining the structure of DNA. Though research science has for many years attracted the interest of mostly men, a recent event sought to encourage young women to build a strong tradition of female scientists and engineers.

The U.S. Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory held its 21<sup>st</sup> annual Science Careers in Search of Women conference this month, welcoming approximately 350 high school students from across the Chicago area to experience science and engineering firsthand.

Science Careers in Search of Women puts students face to face with scientists in a variety of fields and provides an opportunity to spend a day interacting with positive female role models.

"Women are still under represented in scientific and engineering fields," said conference co-chair Cristina Negri, a researcher in Argonne's Energy Systems Division. "Having these young women meet with successful female scientists is an important way to show them that, contrary to gender stereotypes, this is a career path that is accessible to them."



*Teacher Heather Scott and students Stephanie Lamas, Dana Bielinski and Smriti Marwaha examine a test tube at Science Careers in Search of Women, hosted by the U.S. Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory.*

The Science Careers in Search of Women conference was created to reach out and engage high school girls and encourage them to consider careers in science and technology. Research shows that young women often lose interest in scientific and technical fields of study long before they enter college.

"For the past 21 years we have been working to inspire young women to become our next generation of scientists and engineers," said conference co-

chair Harold Myron, director of Argonne's Division of Educational Programs. "A lot of good has come out of the program, and we hope to continue encouraging young women to pursue all of the different opportunities that are available to them."

Students participated in panel discussions with speakers from a variety of scientific and engineering disciplines including biology, chemistry, physics, computer science and engineering. They also

had the opportunity to tour several different laboratories at Argonne, as well as visit career booths.

At lunchtime, students were grouped by their areas of interest for lunch with a scientist in that field, which provided an opportunity for more informal, one-on-one conversation.

The annual conference emphasizes exploring career opportunities in science and technology, and provides information on employment trends and educational requirements. The conferences include a diverse set of speakers and panelists and ample time for students to meet face to face with mentors to ask questions and to learn firsthand what life is like for women scientists and engineers.



*Dana Bielinski peers into a microscope while other students and teachers look on at Science Careers in Search of Women.*

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