

NERD Girls welcome Women in STEM



In the STEM building's Collaboratorium on Thursday, May 15, students and professionals drank tea and ate finger sandwiches while chatting at tables festooned with star confetti and paper planets.

The annual Women in STEM Tea, led by Carol Hsu and Tina Barsotti and the members of Clark NERD girls and GEEKs, invited women professionals to talk with students about their industries and navigating STEM fields.

Barsotti explained, "The Women in STEM tea offers students a way to connect with women in STEM professionals in an casual setting. These professionals inspire our students and bring a sense of community to support and empower the next generation

of women in STEM.”

Table leaders, who took time out of their busy schedules to join us, included:

- Danielle Samson–Green Mountain Structural Engineering
- Joelle Brown–Bonneville Power Administration
- Dr. Joanne Hyndman–Salem Pediatric Clinic
- Veronica Vest–Peterson Structural Engineers
- Becca Dunphy–S&F Land Services
- Tina Jenkins–Mechatronics Professor



Balancing work and family

In one conversation between Dr. Joanne Hyndman, a doctor at Salem Pediatric Clinic, and Sopiia, a first-year student from Ukraine, they discussed balancing careers with family.

Sofiia said, “You have to meet people to hear stories, how they changed degrees, balanced families... it’s interesting to see how people deal with it.

Hyndman agreed, and shared that her classmates in medical school sometimes waited until residency to start a family or sometimes hired outside help. “People do it in all sorts of different ways... it definitely takes a village.”



Opportunities in STEM

Conversations with Joelle Brown, of the Bonneville Power Administration, and Becca Dunphy of S&F Land Services, revealed a lack of women in their fields despite efforts to recruit them.

Brown, who attended Clark herself as a transfer student, said “We don’t see a lot of women.” But she had advice: “Have some

confidence. It helps if you've had a job doing anything or volunteering. Something that shows accountability."

Dunphy explained that the geomatics and surveying field was struggling to recruit new employees, despite the work being in-demand and family-wage. "There's a lot of lacking in certain industries... we've got a lot of people retiring or of retiring age in surveying."

The good news? That creates a pathway for new women in STEM to succeed. Dunphy herself returned to school after ten years working for the postal service. Now, she works part-time for a local company while in school. She will become full-time once she graduates.

Thyda Lim, from Worksource, agreed that "it's never too late" to pursue a new field.



About Clark NERD Girls and GEEKS

Clark NERD Girls and GEEKS is a student-led official Clark College club registered through the Associated Students of Clark College. They are dedicated to breaking down stereotypes of women in STEM and encouraging youth to pursue STEM careers.

Photos: Clark College/Carly Rae Zent