

GIRLS GRADUATE AS SCIENCE AMBASSADORS ^[1]

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The young students impacted more than 9,000 people in their schools and communities with their science outreach projects.

San Juan - Some **93** girls in grades seven through nine graduated from **Ciencia Puerto Rico's (CienciaPR) Seeds of Success Program** after completing a series of workshops and activities

designed to introduce them to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines. During the course of the program, the young women interacted with Latina professionals, outstanding role models in these disciplines, and developed their leadership skills. The free educational initiative gives Puerto Rican girls from public and private schools and homeschoolers the opportunity to become STEM Ambassadors by developing outreach projects in these disciplines in their communities.

Of the **93** girls who completed the program, **68** girls completed their STEM Ambassador Projects, reaching **9,777** people as part of the efforts and science outreach projects in their schools and communities. Over the past five cycles of the initiative, the Seeds of Success Program has directly impacted **453** girls throughout Puerto Rico, who in turn have reached more than **42,777** people with their STEM Ambassador Projects.

As part of the Seeds of Success Program, the new STEM Ambassadors developed and executed projects to raise awareness of the diverse applications of STEM disciplines, while putting their leadership skills into practice. Some of the outstanding projects include: **"Microplastics in the water"**, developed by student Adriana C. Rodríguez Fernández, which consisted of an educational talk to raise awareness of how microplastics affect human beings; **Conversatorio: Infectology, COVID-19 and Vaccines**, a virtual dialogue with Dr. Iris Velázquez, infectologist, an initiative developed by student Fabiana P. Pérez Homs; **Genetic conditions and the lack of geneticists in Puerto Rico**, in which the student Lorianys Casul Collazo interviewed Dr. María del Carmen González, the only pediatric geneticist in Puerto Rico, visited the Neonatal Screening Laboratory of Puerto Rico and developed an informative video on genetic conditions, among other outstanding projects carried out by the students.

Dr. Giovanna Guerrero, executive director of CienciaPR, indicated that the Seeds of Success Program has a very significant impact year after year in the academic lives of Puerto Rican girls throughout the archipelago. Moreover, the Program has an impact in the communities through the educational materials on women in STEM that are distributed to Puerto Rico's educators. It is a multiplier effect, which fills us with great satisfaction," Guerrero said.

The **93** students participated, from August 2021 through April 2022, in several virtual activities focused on the various STEM fields, including "Juntas Podemos," a series of talks with great women in STEM in collaboration with the EcoExploratorio, which reached about **1,500** people; the STEM Workshop "Germinating Chemistry in the Seeds of Triumph"; the "Amgen Science Connection!" conversation; and workshops on leadership, computer science and technology tools. The girls also participated in 1:1 and group mentoring sessions and had access to **60** Latina mentors in STEM.

For the first time this year, **9** Semillas de Triunfo alumnae completed summer training to become peer mentors to the girls in the Semillas de Triunfo program. Empowered in this role, these peer mentors created an online tool called "Leadership Power Training" with the goal of promoting leadership among girls and young women interested in STEM disciplines. The online training has already impacted more than **500** participants and is a free resource.

"It has been a great satisfaction to see the fruit we have sown with the seed of knowledge in these STEM Ambassadors. We are proud of their performance as mentors and role models for the girls in the Program. Seeing the girls put into practice the group work, communication and leadership skills learned in Semillas de Triunfo is the best demonstration of our impact on them," said **Dr. Greetchen Díaz, director of the Science Education and Community Partnerships Program at Ciencia Puerto Rico.**

The Semillas de Triunfo Program was supported by a Coalition of Collaborators composed of different entities from the private, academic and non-profit sectors, including the foundations of **Medtronic, Amgen and Banco Popular de PR, Abarca, Boston Scientific, Evertec, Johnson & Johnson, Lilly, Viatris and the universities of Yale and Puerto Rico with their campuses in Río Piedras, Mayagüez and Humacao.**

Girls and young students are invited to participate in the Seeds of Success 2022-2023 Program.

Girls and young women students interested in participating in the **Seeds of Success Program for the 2022-2023** school year, free of charge, must complete the online application that will be available from **May 12 through June 9, 2022**, through the link <https://bit.ly/SolicitudSemillas2022> [3]. A total of **120 girls from 7th to 9th grade, residents of Puerto Rico**, will be selected. Even if they are not selected, all applicants will have the opportunity to participate in various activities scheduled during the 2022-2023 cycle.

It should be noted that the process to select the girls and young women is a very competitive one. For the 2021-2022 year, a total of 330 applications were received. "We are excited that the interest of the girls is greater year after year and we look forward to meeting the new group of girls interested in becoming future leaders in science," said **Dr. Liz Hernandez, Program Coordinator.**

For more information about the Seeds of Triumph Program, please contact semillas.triunfo@cienciapr.org [4]. You can also visit www.cienciapr.org [5].

About Ciencia Puerto Rico

Ciencia Puerto Rico (CienciaPR, www.cienciapr.org [5]) is a global community of more than 15,000 scientists, students, educators and allies who understand that science can empower people with the knowledge, capacity and agency to improve their lives and society. The organization leverages this rich and diverse community to democratize science, and transform science education and professional training. Since 2006, CienciaPR has successfully engaged and trained scientists, students, and educators, and created culturally relevant educational resources and experiences that improve students' attitudes and interests toward science and self-confidence in their scientific abilities. CienciaPR's efforts over the past decade have garnered multiple accolades, including being named a "Bright Spot" for Hispanic education by the White House in 2015.

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