



PRESS RELEASE

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Pennsbury Students Celebrate Engineers Week as Boeing CEO and Local Elected Officials Honor Levittown’s “Rosie the Riveter”

(FALLSINGTON, PA – February 25, 2021) Approximately 800 eighth graders across all three middle schools in the Pennsbury School District kicked off Engineers Week with several high-profile VIPs on a Zoom call.

“It was our special honor to partner with Senator Bob Casey, Jr. Representative Brian Fitzpatrick, Boeing CEO David Calhoun, Ms. Mae Krier (Levittown’s “Rosie the Riveter”), Pennsbury Superintendent Dr. William Gretzula, and engineers from Boeing Aeronautics to participate in two lessons during science class,” said Pennsbury’s K-12 Curriculum Coordinator, Jamie Swanson.

First, on February 17th, Boeing engineers Hana McKee and Christina Bowen helped science students be curious about such things as: What makes things Fly? What is an engineer? “After learning about the very important factors in flight, students became the engineers themselves in a design challenge to build the best paper airplane,” said Ms. Swanson. “Students designed and built their planes, then tested them for distance, stability, and placement of cargo loads. All of the eighth grade students participated in this challenge, then discussed with the engineers and each other what designs were the best.”

On Monday, February 22nd, the same students witnessed a special recognition ceremony along with the elected officials and the District Superintendent as Boeing CEO David Calhoun honored Mae Krier. Ms. Krier is a retired Boeing employee who answered the call to honor and respect her country in the 1940s by joining the “Rosies” from across the country to build the planes that would fly over Normandy and become integral in winning World War II. Mr. Calhoun surprised Ms. Krier with an announcement about the firm’s “Rosie the Rocketeer,” a robotic “Rosie” – complete with the signature red and white polka dot bandana – that will soon fly in a Boeing Starliner capsule to the International Space Station.

Students watched during the Zoom call as Senator Casey interviewed Ms. Krier in a “Fireside Chat.” Ms. Krier’s words of encouragement to the Pennsbury students were to “Persevere and never give up! Go do it!” she said. Her admiration for the space program and her Congressional Gold Medal highlight her trailblazing role. In a continuing chat with Representative Fitzpatrick, Ms. Krier helped to highlight the STEM field and its importance in our ever-changing world. “We are excited to grow with the STEM occupations that Representative Fitzpatrick described as exploding for our next generation of scientists and engineers in the making,” said Ms. Swanson.

Following remarks by Superintendent Dr. Gretzula welcoming Boeing as the District's newest Pennsbury Partner, several of the students had the opportunity to describe how they completed the aeronautical design challenge. They also discussed the world of engineering and what they know about this career pathway.

Additional comments by Pennsbury faculty:

Tom Mellon, 8th grade teacher at Charles Boehm Middle School: "This was such a great opportunity for students to complete an activity in the classroom and actually discuss the scientific method with women who work in the field of STEM."

Jessica Berkey, 8th grade teacher at Pennwood Middle School: "This was a wonderful opportunity for all. Students were engaged in the design challenge and enjoyed constructing and launching the airplanes. It was wonderful having two women in the field of engineering lead this opportunity."

Susan Mahoney, 7th/8th Grade teacher at William Penn Middle School: "What a great experience for our 8th grade students and teachers. It was so nice to hear from the Boeing engineers and learn a little about what they do each day. They showed our students that it is possible to love what you do if you continue to work hard and keep learning and make sure you always leave some room for fun! Getting to see Mae Krier was also very inspiring for me. She is a strong woman and role model who continues to keep helping others and I am proud she is from Levittown, PA just like me!"

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