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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Steinert High School Juniors Receive Prestigious Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory Women in Engineering Employee Resource Group Math and Science Awards

Hamilton, NJ. Steinert High School is proud to announce juniors Grace Morales and Madison Szczepanski have received the [Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory](#) Women in Engineering Employee Resource Group Math and Science Award. This award recognizes young women who are high school juniors excelling in math and science and are planning to pursue a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) career path in college.

Madison is a lifelong HTSD student, attending Yardville Heights Elementary, Reynolds Middle before Steinert High School. Madison spends her time in school serving as an editor for the school newspaper, co-vice president for the math club, the For Club (Friends of Rachel), peer leadership, national honor society, math honor society, marching band, and manages the girls' basketball book. When not in school, Madison dances and volunteers her time with the Girl Scouts. Madison's favorite subject is math, "having a father (Mr. Szczepanski, Steinert High School) for your math teacher challenges me to work hard in math as he is always teaching me," said Madison. Madison is currently taking five AP classes: AP Calculus AB, AP Physics, AP World History Modern, AP Psychology and AP English Language and Composition.

When asked who inspired and influenced her learning, Madison replied "Mr. Ryan helped me understand math to a new level. He always explained it well and encouraged all his students to communicate with one another. I also asked him for a letter of recommendation for this award." Madison plans to pursue a doctorate degree in mechanical engineering in college and receive another degree in mathematics. Right

now, MIT and Virginia Tech are Madison's top choices. "When I saw the award notification email, I was in shock. Only six students in New Jersey received this award; I couldn't believe I was one of the six!" said Madison. When asked about her strategy for success, Madison stated "always strive for your maximum best and always keep up with your school work no matter what the level is, as it will help you in tests and quizzes."

Madison works part time at Dairy Queen where she enjoys customer interaction and volunteers every spring and fall for Miracle League in the YMCA program at Sawmill (since fourth grade). Madison has worked to achieve her Silver Award in Girl Scouts through creating a sensory cornfield.

Grace Morales is also a lifelong HTSD student, attending Alexander Elementary, Reynolds Middle, and Steinert High School. Grace participates in leadership roles in math and art, serving as the Math Club Co-Vice President and the National Art Honors Society Chairperson. Grace is also a member of the National Honors Society and the National Honors Math Society. Grace is an active participant in the marching band unit (playing the trombone), newspaper club, Italian Club and Teens on Fire Club.

Grace volunteers her time with Teens on Fire (which is part of Embright Education, formerly Camp Fire USA) and is an artist in her limited free time. Painting is her passion, however Grace would like to pursue a Math and Physics degree, while continuing to paint and draw and focus on a minor in Art in college. "We are currently working on a library art mural along with service projects related to art," said Grace. "Math is my favorite subject as I have always enjoyed it and found myself drawn to it. I enjoy being part of the math club and bringing students together as the co-vice president. All of my math teachers have inspired me, most recently Mr. Ryan. He is very helpful and kind; I get to work with him a lot in math club. He wrote my letter of recommendation for this award and I am very grateful for all of his help," shared Grace.

Grace's mother, Mrs. Barbara Morales is the Principal of McGalliard Elementary school. "My mother is a big source of my work ethic and desire to always try to do my best. The work my mother does for her school community inspires me; I look up to her a lot. I liked the idea of recognizing women in STEM, which is why I applied," stated Grace. When asked what advice Grace would provide incoming high school students, Grace replied "High school provides you with multiple opportunities. If you stay on top of your work, you will be successful. Also getting involved in your school community and meetings will change your whole perspective on high school."

Grace was incredibly honored to have been chosen to have her colored pencil still life art project selected to be displayed at Grounds for Sculpture as part of a state exhibit, in which 3 students art work were selected per county in the state of NJ. Grace was nominated by Steinert to apply for The Governor's School in Math

and Sciences at Drew University a three-week summer program.

“Congratulations to Grace and Madison on this award. To have one student receive this very competitive honor is amazing, but to have two students receive it is incredible. This recognition is a testament to the hard work and dedication to math and science both Grace and Madison have demonstrated over the years. We are all proud of their accomplishments and for winning this award,” said Dr. Scott Rocco, Superintendent of Schools.

For more information contact Laura Geltch, HTSD Grants, Communication, and Sponsorship Coordinator.

Photo Attachments (*left to right*):

1. Students: Grace Morales and Madison Szczepanski - Photo by Laura Geltch
2. Group photo: Mechanical Engineers and CoChairs of the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory Women in Engineering. Cate Biava, Grace Morales, Madison Szczepanski, and Claudia Bernhardt
3. Artwork: Grace Morales
4. Volunteerism: Madison Szczepanski

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