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Sikorsky Mentor Inspires SoundWaters Science Stars **Sikorsky Engineer Works with SoundWaters to Build Girls' Passion for Science**

Stamford, CT – On Wednesday, April 12, Michelle Andersen, a System Engineer from Sikorsky Aircraft in Stratford, stepped into SoundWaters' Coastal Education Center on Cove Island in Stamford to address a very different crowd than what she's used to. Michelle came face to face with 92 enthusiastic Stamford elementary school girls who had converged on SoundWaters during their school vacation week as part of the Science Stars program, SoundWaters' acclaimed girls-in-science program. SoundWaters, the Stamford-based environmental education organization has conducted Science Stars since 2005, immersing over 1,000 girls in science and other STEM subjects over that period.

Science Stars was free for all the girls, made possible by generous funding from PepsiCo, People's United Bank, Purdue Pharma, Xerox and Fairfield County's Community Foundation-Donor Advised Fund.

Every day of school vacation SoundWaters education team led the Science Stars through coastal field studies and laboratory experiments. The girls also sailed on the 80', three-masted schooner *SoundWaters* during the week, testing the water of Long Island Sound, learning navigation and studying marine animal life up close.

Leigh Shemitz, President of SoundWaters, describes Science Stars as "among our most successful and in-demand science-enrichment programs" for an underserved segment of the student population. "Results from past years show that we are also encouraging them to become more confident and independent," Shemitz said.

In addition to their full schedule of exploration and experiments, the Science Stars conducted experiments with professional woman mentors each day. In addition to Sikorsky Aircraft, the girls met mentors from PepsiCo, Xylem and Q88.

About SoundWaters

SoundWaters, founded in 1989, is the premier environmental education organization focused on the protection of Long Island Sound and its watershed. Annually, SoundWaters hosts ship and land-based programs for 32,000 children, including over 10,000 from underserved communities. SoundWaters works in partnership with individuals, schools, communities, businesses, civic organizations, and other environmental and educational organizations to develop experiences that foster a sense of responsibility for the environment and encourage actions that ensure the sustainable future of the Long Island Sound ecosystem. For more information, please visit www.soundwaters.org.

Photos Attached: During her recent visit to SoundWaters in Stamford, Sikorsky System Engineer, Michelle Andersen, taught the Science Stars how engineering is important in every facet of their lives.

