

The founders of the United InnoWorks Academy believed that more could be and should be done to provide underprivileged youth with extracurricular opportunities to explore the richness and wonder of science and engineering. Unfortunately, many of these programs have very high costs that largely preclude these students. Thus, all InnoWorks programs are entirely free of charge for nominated students, including transportation, food and drinks, memorabilia, awards, and all program equipment.

Many of these youth lack role-models in science and engineering, and therefore only view these fields as esoteric subjects to suffer through in school. InnoWorks programs are designed and implemented by motivated volunteer college students majoring in science, engineering, and other related disciplines who exhibit a passion for helping others and sharing their interests and knowledge. Hence, InnoWorks is uniquely positioned to help these youth take another look at science and engineering by providing positive role models outside of their school environment. The four primary goals of the InnoWorks program are:

- 1) *To provide underprivileged students with an opportunity to explore the links between science and engineering in the classroom and in the real world and to consider them as potential career paths,*
- 2) *To use cutting-edge neuroscience and education research to develop methods to improve student learning, mentoring, and teaching,*
- 3) *To foster collaboration and the development of strong work ethic, and*
- 4) *To develop interpersonal relationships in a community-focused mentoring environment.*

We work primarily with middle school students because we believe youth of this age have enough maturity and experience to be able to successfully participate in InnoWorks while at the same time, they are young enough to be highly impressionable. Studies have confirmed InnoWorks' thesis that disadvantaged youth stand to benefit significantly in the short- and long-term from mentoring programs that expose them to creative hands-on learning pertinent to real-world applications. While we would like the students to obtain a significant amount of knowledge from our program, it is more important that the program improves their attitude towards learning. Ultimately, we hope that students will leave our program with a renewed enthusiasm for learning, especially in the realm of science and engineering.