



architect in the making

Taylor McCowan - 12th Grade Student



She can become a civil engineer, or more specifically a structural engineer. Although she knew people who were in science or technical fields before attending the camp, none of them were women who looked like her. Through her GEMS experience, she was introduced to a world of possibilities and the tools to help her pursue them. Taylor, who attends an all-girls school, has always liked and been good at math, but was not as adept at science. At GEMS camp, she learned more about science and how to approach it in a way that has improved both her interest in and her capability with it.

One experience demonstrated to Taylor that she should step up more often to take the lead. During a service learning project for Bonton Farms, Taylor's team struggled for the first few days. Other team members initially exerted their dominance over the group but the work wasn't progressing. The team realized that they needed to start over. Taylor presented her idea and organized the work of the team that allowed them to present successfully to their client at the end of the week. Taylor proved to herself that she could be the one to take charge.

In addition to making good friends her own age, Taylor liked getting to know the older girls who served as mentors. Everyone wanted to be at GEMS and they were fun. The other girls made her want to strive for better. Her own cousin, Kennedy, was a GEMS mentor when Taylor started attending the camp. Taylor was able to see Kennedy in a whole new light, as a leader and role model, rather than just as a cousin she hangs out with. Taylor is grateful for the way GEMS keeps her connected to the other girls during the school year.

Even though the GEMS camp of summer 2020 was virtual instead of in person, Taylor gushed about her experience. There were no dorms to stay in or cafeterias to hang out in, but it didn't seem to diminish the value she received. The leadership focused training is preparing her to become a mentor next year. The exercises she engaged in taught her more about herself and what she needs to be a successful learner, such as hands-on activities.



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An enhanced work ethic, along with study and organization skills Taylor learned in her first GEMS camp experience have served her well in her current remote learning situation. She is able to balance her leisure time and school time effectively. Taylor is grateful for all that the GEMS camp has given her thus far. She has had opportunities to do things that she wouldn't otherwise have done, like indoor skydiving, camping, and taking advantage of the Girl Scouts STEM Center of Excellence. She looks forward to being able to participate in the GEMS international trips when travel is back to normal. Taylor enthusiastically recommends that any girl who is thinking about studying STEM or a STEM career should go to the GEMS camp. It is an "amazing experience!"

FIRST PERSON

My older cousin, Kennedy, attended GEMS camp before me and encouraged me to apply. Even though I missed the deadline, my application was accepted. I am so glad it was because GEMS camp has been amazing. I met many good friends there, including my roommate Willow who I LOVE. I also got to see my cousin in a whole new light as a mentor and leader. I already knew that I wanted to design things for my career and thought about being an architect. At GEMS camp, I learned about engineering. Now I know I could be a civil engineer, or more specifically a structural engineer.

GEMS Camp exposed me to many people and things that I wouldn't have otherwise experienced. Before GEMS, most of the people I knew in STEM fields were men. I met some incredible women in STEM fields through GEMS. I met a woman archeologist and a civil engineer. It made me see people that looked like me doing amazing things. It also made me be able to visualize myself in that position. Rather than "yeah, there are women in STEM but you can't really see any of them, they just exist." It was a good moment. It made me feel like I could reach those goals.

If a younger girl would ask me if she should go to the GEMS camp, I would say "Do it, it's an amazing experience, especially if you are thinking about a career in STEM. Or if you just want to meet new people in your area, then just go to GEMS camp. It's an experience like no other, to be honest."



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I really like Math. I am very good at Math, but for science, I've always needed help. I never really got it. I always had to go to tutoring. But after going to the GEMS Camp and having them sit down with me and take me through processes that got rushed through in normal classes, I understood more.

GEMS Camp in 2020 was virtual. Because it was the summer between 9th and 10th grade, it was more leadership focused, personality focused and about growing as individuals. I really loved it. I missed the face-to-face aspect, having a roommate and being able to walk around the campus. But I liked the one-on-one interaction we got to have with Ms. Saki. I learned about myself at GEMS Camp. For my learning style, I need to have hands on experiences. It helped me know what I needed for myself and helped me to have a better start to the next school year.

At GEMS, we were given homework, we were given tasks that we had to complete back in our dorm rooms for the camp, and we had free time. Now that I am an online student, I have to think about these times like I did in GEMS camp. I have all this free time where I could be doing work or I could be watching a movie. It made me think about those things more.