

[THE GRID](#) > CHANGING THE WORLD ONE SOLAR-POWERED COOKIE BOOTH AT A TIME



CHANGING THE WORLD ONE SOLAR-POWERED COOKIE BOOTH AT A TIME

4/24/2017 5:00 PM

"When you invent, you can change the world."

These wise words come to us from 10-year-old-Girl Scout and fourth-grader Gracie Gerardy. Pretty insightful, and we couldn't agree more!

Gracie is part of Chicago Troop 60194, a group of girls on a mission to build the best solar-powered cookie booth—ever.

<

Tell me S'more about this cookie booth, you say?

To celebrate its 100th anniversary, The Girl Scouts are holding a [Bling Your Booth Challenge](#). The troop that creates the coolest booth wins \$3,000 dollars to support a community service project. Our girls wanted to do something big—very big. Troop 60194 was up for the challenge alongside their fearless leader and Exelon employee, Betsy Soehren Jones.

Last year, the girls ran into a few problems: their booth was too small to hold enough cookies, it was hard to transport from one place to the next, and finding a spot to plug in their light-up sign wasn't convenient. Their sales suffered as a result.

So, the girls asked: how can we work together to make our booth better?

Their solution: a bigger, solar-powered booth made from PVC pipes. This new design would power their lights using the sun instead of plugging it in (how cool is that?). The lighter PVC pipe would make it bigger and also easier to move.

When we heard about their ideas, we immediately knew we had to help them make it happen.

Working with the Chicago chapter of the Network of Exelon Women (NEW) and the Marian Catholic High School Maker's Lab, Exelon volunteers hosted the troop to teach them about solar generation, and then show them how to put the booth together with the help of 3D printer technology.

In the process of building it, the girls learned how to apply STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) to solve real-life problems, which is great for them...and for us. Getting more girls involved with STEM at an early age increases and molds their future educational and career interests.

Currently, K-12 male and female students generally perform equally well in mathematics and science on standardized tests. Despite their proficiency, fewer women pursue **bachelor's degrees** in computer sciences (17.9%), engineering (19.3%), physical sciences (39%), and mathematics (43.1%). As a result, women make up half of the total U.S. college-educated workforce, but only **29%** work in science and engineering.

Here at Exelon, we are committed to closing that gap. Engaging girls with STEM on a consistent basis, and showing them what they can do—like build a solar-powered cookie booth--helps them understand its value and what they can do.

"It's kind of like a puzzle," said third-grader Cassidy Cage,

The girls have sold about 4,500 boxes so far to raise money for a trip to Baltimore and Washington, D.C., where they plan to deliver 500 boxes of cookies to wounded veterans.

With their booth under their belt, the girls from Troop 60194 are already looking for more things to build. One girl wants to construct an entire building. Another wants to become an astronaut and explore Mars. We love that their visions are boundless and they already see a future for themselves in STEM, which benefits all of us.

Troop 60194 learned a ton on their journey from the design, prototype and construction of their booth. Through it all, it was the lesson of the engineering process that seemed to stick out in their minds:

“You have to think of a problem and find a solution, then build,” fourth-grader Matilyn Terrell said.

Follow the journey of Troop 60194's solar-powered, 3D-printed cookie booth from start to finish. >

WHAT'S NEXT



Women Light The Way at Exelon on Equality Day

[Read More >](#)



Celebrating Veterans Day by Serving Veterans All Year Round

[Read More >](#)