

Cast Members Receive Honors for Achievements in Engineering

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla., Oct. 12, 2012—Excellence and the pursuit of innovation recently brought 2,000 professionals and students to Disney's Coronado Springs Resort for the 24th annual HENNAC Great Minds in STEM (Science, Technology, Math and Engineering) conference hosted by Walt Disney Parks and Resorts.

For the past 23 years, the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation (HENNAC) has honored the nation's best and brightest industry experts. With young professionals as role models, HENNAC aims to inspire and motivate students to pursue careers in technology, while also staying connected with the Hispanic community.

This year, two Walt Disney World Cast Members were among the recipients for outstanding accomplishments in the STEM fields.

Vanessa Rosas, experience development manager, was a HENAAC Luminary Honoree, which recognizes individuals who are leading, collaborating and initiating key programs and research within their fields.

"With this award, I hope that I can continue to serve as an example in the community," said Rosas. "To be able to use engineering as a tool to make a difference in the world every day, will hopefully pathe the way for future generations to be inspired by STEM."

Michael Labonge, director of design and engineering ride and show science systems, was announced as the 2012 Vanguard Award winner. Labonge's efforts directly impact the quality and safety of guest and employee experiences on attractions, transportation and entertainment venues Disney presents around the world.

The Vanguard Award was established in 2007 to honor individuals who may or may not have a technical background and are making huge progress in promoting STEM education and careers in their community, state and county. A Vanguard Award recipient has the ability to convene large groups of stakeholders to positively change current patterns around STEM and the Hispanic Community.

"Working towards improving education around STEM is exciting," said Labonge. "By going to local elementary and middle schools once a month and showing the students the lively and interactive Disney-branded presentations of science, engineering and mathematics, will help inspire them to pursue careers later on ."

Walt Disney World has been a proud sponsor of HENAAC since 2004, as part of its corporate commitment to the Hispanic community and dedication to professional development, achievement and innovation.

For more information on HENAAC and the convention, visit <http://www.greatmindsinstem.org/henaac/conference/>