



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

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## MIREYA SÁNCHEZ-MAES GAINS IN THE EDUCATION OF MATH AND SCIENCE ALUMNI

I'm currently a high school sophomore and enjoy using computer science and technology to solve real world problems.

### WORDS OF ADVICE

Apply, apply, apply! At times, the prospect of embarking on a STEM field may seem daunting, especially if you haven't been exposed to much STEM in school. However, AEOP programs offer students of all backgrounds unique and exciting opportunities to learn from professionals and gain experience solving real-world problems.

### BEST THINGS ABOUT THE PROGRAM

In the GEMS program, we don't just encounter the vast array of topics and research in the STEM field; we also, more importantly, understand their applications in the real world. Too often, in a traditional classroom setting, we can lose the connection between the tools and information we are learning. The teachers and mentors at GEMS do an outstanding job conveying the importance of their work. It was amazing to see my mentors' faces light up as they explained how the concept we just explored can save lives.

### HOW PARTICIPATING IN AEOP INSPIRED YOU TO ADVANCE IN THE STEM FIELD

Ever since I was young, I've had a strong passion for science and mathematics, but it's always been alarmingly broad. When I tried to imagine my future self in a career, the vision was different every time—engineer one day, mathematician the next! From my participation in GEMS, I witnessed how knowledge from one subject can overlap with another in useful ways. Now, rather than hastening to narrow my area of study, I constantly work to enhance and diversify my knowledge so I can gain new perspectives and think through problems more effectively!

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