



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Feb. 9, 2015

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## **United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra and Sierra Nevada Journeys Partner with GE's Bently Nevada to Bring Together STEM and Literacy Education**

**Reno, Nev.** — United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra (UWNNS) and Sierra Nevada Journeys (SNJ) have partnered with GE's Bently Nevada, part of GE Measurement and Control, a division of GE Oil and Gas, to launch a pilot program that marries STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education with literacy education in order to capture student interest to develop grade-level, non-fiction reading skills. As part of this collaboration, GE's Bently Nevada employee volunteers will create STEM-based literacy kits to model best practices for linking STEM and literacy learning in ways that engage students' curiosity and build academic skills.

The pilot program also includes the "Matter Matters" unit for 2nd graders, consisting of three in-class lessons taught by SNJ's credentialed science teachers. The "Matter Matters" program employs hands-on exploration and experimentation of the scientific principles of matter, including solids, liquids and gases. After completing the unit, each student receives a literacy kit developed around the book "What is the World Made of?" Each kit contains the book, as well as supplementary activities created by SNJ's science teachers to extend learning throughout the literacy-building process.

Minden Elementary School, a participant in many of SNJ's programs, will receive these kits and participate in the pilot program. SNJ's credentialed science teachers conducted the three in-class lessons on Jan. 26-28. GE's Bently Nevada employees will assemble the literacy kits at noon on Tuesday, Feb. 10. GE's Bently Nevada, along with GE Measurement and Control is committed to supporting STEM education both locally and globally.

In 2013, UWNNS Board of Directors formally adopted "children reading at grade level" as the organization's focus with the goal of doubling the number of children in northern Nevada reading proficiently by the end of third grade by 2020. Statistics show students that do not graduate from high school are more likely to be unemployed, have a child as a teenager, and rely on government cash assistance, food stamps and housing assistance. Every "drop-out" costs the community an estimated \$260,000 in lost earnings, taxes and productivity. The impact of the low graduation rate directly affects Nevada's economy by contributing to the lack of an educated, skilled workforce – including the STEM workforce.

"By promoting the importance of early grade-level reading success, as well as teaching these students science, technology, engineering and math, we are starting the process of giving these children the tools they need to succeed in all aspects of the education system," said Karen Barsell, CEO and president and UWNNS. "Nevada has made an economic push to attract STEM-based companies to our region. This STEM-based literacy program is an important part in developing the future workforce that will not only be working at these businesses, but potentially running them."

SNJ is a nonprofit that delivers innovative outdoor, science-based education programs for youth to develop critical thinking skills and to inspire natural resource stewardship. They accomplish this by combining school-based curriculum, field and residential experiential programs, and professional development for teachers, creating multiple education points of contact for students and schools. SNJ's programs create higher cognition and long-term student achievement, while building the capacity of educators to effectively teach their curriculum.

"We are thrilled to partner with UWNNS in delivering an interdisciplinary approach to these students' education," said Eaton Dunkelberger, CEO of SNJ. "Research on early literacy has shown that uniting STEM and reading in ways that are exciting and relevant for students is a very effective model. The bottom line is that science literacy

is based on critical thinking, reading and observation skills. By learning the building blocks of critical thought and non-fiction reading, we're helping prepare students for the increasingly complex world of college and industry.”

#### **About United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra**

UWNNS has successfully served northern Nevada for more than 70 years. UWNNS has completed an historic direction-setting effort to identify and concentrate on the most important social issues affecting individuals and families in the region. UWNNS has adopted the critical issue of “children reading at grade level” as its focus area moving forward. This adopted issue will allow UWNNS to better prioritize resources to address key issues in order to make the greatest impact and create lasting change. In 2015, UWNNS will reach the goal of \$100 Million raised since we started in 1942. To celebrate this goal, we have established the \$100 Million Club and invite you to join us. For more information, call 775-322-8668 or visit [www.uwnns.org](http://www.uwnns.org).

#### **About Sierra Nevada Journeys**

Sierra Nevada Journeys is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that delivers innovative outdoor, science-based education programs for youth to develop critical thinking skills and to inspire natural resource stewardship. We do this by combining school-based curriculum, field and residential experiential programs, and professional development for teachers, creating multiple education points of contact for students and schools. Our programs create higher cognition and long-term student achievement, while building the capacity of educators to effectively teach their curriculum. Since our start in 2006 we have served over 50,000 children and 3,500 teachers, and our participating students show an average 88-92% increase in comprehension of state science standards. For more information about our programs or to donate please visit [www.sierranevadajourneys.org](http://www.sierranevadajourneys.org) or call 775-741-4795.

#### **About GE Measurement & Control**

GE Measurement & Control is a leading innovator in advanced software and services; sensor-based measurement; non-destructive testing and inspection; flow and process control; turbine, generator and plant controls; and condition monitoring. Providing for the industrial health of our customers' most critical assets, we deliver accuracy, productivity, predictive maintenance, and safety to a wide range of industries, including oil & gas, power generation, aerospace, metals and transportation. Through our advanced approach to connecting intelligent machines, big data and analytics, we help our customers navigate complex operations, tighter regulations and a growing skills gap; while improving asset and operational performance – ultimately driving better business outcomes. Headquartered in Boston, USA, Measurement & Control has more than 40 facilities in 25 countries and is part of GE Oil & Gas. For further information, visit [www.ge-mcs.com](http://www.ge-mcs.com).

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