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CPS Students Introduce Russian Youth Agency Staff to Cutting-Edge Technology in Museum of Science and Industry's Fab Lab

CHICAGO (Dec. 6, 2011) – Students from Solorio Academy High School in Chicago introduced staff from the Russian Federal Youth Agency to the high-tech projects they're making in the Museum of Science and Industry's Fab Lab as part of a weeklong training camp for the Russian visitors.

The Museum's Fab Lab – which stands for digital fabrication laboratory – allows people to dream up, design and make items using cutting-edge software and equipment, such as 2D and 3D printers. The equipment used in the Fab Lab teaches important technology and engineering skills.

The Russian Federal Youth Agency is planning to open five Fab Labs across Russia. Agency staff members are attending a weeklong training camp at MSI designed to provide them with the skills and information they need to operate a Fab Lab.

The Solorio students, who are members of the school's Innovation Club, visit MSI's Fab Lab biweekly to work on motor-controlled projects such as robots and radio-controlled cars.

"Creativity and cutting-edge innovation are critical skills for our future workforce," said Rabiah Mayas, PhD, the Museum's director of science and integrated strategies. "The Museum's Fab Lab is embedded in a youth-focused, educational setting, which allows us to inspire the next generation of designers, engineers and innovators. We're honored to host this training camp and help expand the reach of the Fab Lab network."

During the six-day training camp at the Museum, the Russian visitors are learning the history of the global Fab Lab network, ways to provide programs for youth, how to set up and maintain a Fab Lab and how to operate the high-tech equipment. They will also gain perspective from Fab Lab representatives from the MIT Center for Bits and Atoms, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Innovation Center Iceland.

By the end of the camp on Saturday, the participants will make personalized snow globes with environmental sensors. Teens in the Museum's Science Achievers youth development program also will make snow globes that they will share with the Russian visitors. The public is invited to tour the Fab Lab and see these projects during an open house on Saturday, Dec. 10, from 2 to 4 p.m.

The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (MSI) offers thousands of fun and interactive exhibits and one-of-a-kind, world-class experiences to inspire the inventive genius in everyone. Through its Center for the Advancement of Science Education, MSI also aspires to a larger vision: to inspire and motivate children to achieve their full potential in science, technology,

medicine and engineering. Come visit and find *your* inspiration! MSI is open every day except Dec. 25, and regular hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. The Museum is supported in part through the generosity of the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District. For more information, find MSI online at msichicago.org or call (773) 684-1414 or (800) GO-TO-MSI outside of the Chicago area.

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