

For immediate release: December 2, 2021

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Explora's \$250,000 Bank of America Grant Brings X Studio Over the Funding Finish Line

New 8,000 SqFt Center is Phase One of "Cradle through Career" STEAM Learning Campus

Albuquerque, NM - Explora and Bank of America are investing in New Mexico teens and families by partnering on X Studio, a new 8,000-square-foot addition to Explora that will serve as New Mexico's only teen STEAM workforce development center. Bank of America has provided a generous \$250,000 grant that is the capstone for this capital campaign, ensuring X Studio construction is complete by early 2022.

Kristin Leigh, Explora deputy director and director of administration and advancement, explains that X Studio is Phase One of Explora's master plan to develop a Cradle through Career STEAM Learning Campus around its Sawmill/Old Town location. X Studio will be a one-stop-shop for teens to explore, hang out, and discover pathways to futures that only they can imagine. In addition, programs and initiatives at the new STEAM Learning Campus will improve educational outcomes, drive economic development, and boost family and community prosperity.

Leigh said, "In partnership with the City of Albuquerque, State of New Mexico, and incredible community and corporate partners, like Bank of America, we soon will open X Studio's door to engage, educate, and employ New Mexico's teens. Every one of them deserves access to spaces where they can learn and grow, question and experiment, succeed and fail, and journey along pathways to STEAM careers. X Studio will be a space where teens and young adults can move from scientific play into serious work in STEAM jobs that have the potential to end generational cycles of poverty."

"New Mexico has a legacy of science with some of America's leading scientific minds right here, so Explora's new X Studio and its Cradle Through Career STEAM campus will create exciting long-term career opportunities for our youth. Bank of America invests in career development pathways for teens and young adults who are historically excluded from STEAM, ensuring equity and access to economic success," said Paul Mondragon, New Mexico President of Bank of America. "Given the tremendous impact this effort will make on future generations and the economy, the bank's quarter-million-dollar grant is one of the largest the bank has ever made here in the state."

X Studio will serve thousands of teens a year and will provide intensive physics, chemistry, robotics, design, film, and coding programs; engineering, vocational trades, and fabrication opportunities in a Maker Space with Makers-in-Residence; mentor programs, a Bank of America Exhibition Gallery as the main exhibit space at X Studio and events that bring together scientists, engineers, and young adults to articulate pathways to STEAM careers; interactive exhibitions highlighting the local STEAM industry and job opportunities; an expanded internship program, which will employ up to 60 young adults; and more!

A future phase of the Cradle through Career project includes the new Brillante Learning Center. This STEAM-based preschool will serve local residents and be the teaching facility for early childhood programs at local higher-ed institutions.

About Explora: Explora is a science center and children's museum in Albuquerque, with a mission of creating opportunities for inspirational discovery and the joy of lifelong learning through interactive experiences in science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM). Explora serves thousands of people of all backgrounds each year and is dedicated to improving New Mexico's educational and economic outcomes. For information, visit www.explora.us or contact explora@explora.us.