

## PRESS RELEASE

### **First-Ever Girl Scout Troop to Compete in Nation's Largest Youth Rocketry Contest Troop 353 from the San Gabriel Valley advances to National Finals of the Team America Rocketry Challenge (TARC), after propelling past more than 700 teams across the country**

**LOS ANGELES, May 1, 2014** – After months of designing, building, and launching homemade model rockets, Girl Scout Troop 353 from the San Gabriel Valley will compete in the national finals of the prestigious Team America Rocketry Challenge (TARC) on May 10 in Washington, D.C.

TARC is the world's largest rocket contest for high school and middle school students and a key piece of the aerospace industry's strategy to build a stronger U.S. workforce in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The competition is sponsored by the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), the National Association of Rocketry, and NASA. Troop 353 is the first-ever Girl Scout troop to make it to nationals in the competition's 12-year history. Because of their tremendous efforts, AIA has even asked the girls to do a presentation for Congress while in D.C.

For the contest, teams must design and build a model rocket that can travel to exactly 825 feet and back within 48-50 seconds while carrying precious cargo—two raw eggs that must return safely to the ground undamaged. It is one of the most difficult challenges in the competition's history, but Troop 353—Kara Chuang, Alexis Cordes, Maddie Emslie, Emily Guarin, Hannah Kim, Milan Gutierrez, and Vienna Murillo—are up for tackling it. The girls all spent seven months designing their rocket to meet these goals, building it from scratch, and test-flying it twice a month.

"In a competition where virtually all the finalists are male and high-school seniors who have competed multiple times, Troop 353's team is all girls in ninth and tenth grade," Troop Leader Josselyn Emslie said. "None of the girls are old enough to have studied trigonometry, calculus, physics, and aerodynamics in school—they have had to learn it on their own in order to calculate their design and flight parameters."

To support them in their efforts, local council Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles (GSGLA) is providing financial assistance to the troop for their trip to D.C. With its strong history in providing enriching STEM programs for girls, the council currently has 15 GSGLA-sponsored *FIRST* Lego League robotics teams and hosts introductory rocketry programs three times a year where hundreds of Girl Scouts build and launch rockets at the Santa Fe Dam. All thanks to individual donations and partnerships, Girl Scouts also hosts video game design workshops, app creation classes, physics programs where girls learn to build simple machines, and more.

"We are so thrilled with Troop 353's achievements," said Lise Luttgens, CEO of GSGLA. "At Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles, we believe girls can do anything, and Troop 353 is an outstanding example of this—they found a passion, set a goal, and have worked hard to accomplish it. Best of all, they have mentored younger girls to also realize their STEM dreams."

Because of their Girl Scout experiences, the girls all name engineering, aerospace, science-related medical fields, and education as their college and future career focuses. In June, four will earn the highest honor in Girl Scouts, the Girl Scout Gold Award, for leading sustainable projects that identify a community issue. One mentored a TARC team at her school for her Gold Award, another taught beginning rocketry.

“Being an all-girl team in a male field, especially since we fly in hot pink, has made us stand out and the girls have gotten much positive attention from it,” said Emslie, noting that the girls have been asked to do several presentations for STEM educators at places like CalTech. “This summer they plan to launch into underwater robotics.”

**About Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles:**

Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles serves more than 40,000 girls in partnership with more than 20,000 volunteers throughout the diverse communities of Los Angeles County and parts of Kern, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties. The council’s programs engage girls in the areas of Leadership, Arts & Culture, Business Smarts, Environment & Outdoor Adventure, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), and Wellness & Healthy Living. To join, volunteer, reconnect, or support, visit [www.girlscoutsLA.org](http://www.girlscoutsLA.org) or call 1-888-GSGLA-4-U.



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