



Joliet Junior College, International Society of Automation, and Polished Pebbles partner to create first industrial automation experience for Shoop Academy of Math, Science & Technology

Joliet, Ill. – March 14, 2022 – On March 26, 2022, Joliet Junior College (JJC), International Society of Automation - Will/DuPage chapter (ISA), and Polished Pebbles are partnering in the Pink Hard Hat Project to create the first-of-its-kind industrial automation experience for elementary school students at Shoop Academy in Chicago, IL.

The automation experience through JJC, ISA, and Polished Pebbles will help Shoop Academy students explore industrial automation careers and provide resources to optimize their chances for career success. The Pink Hard Hat Project is a component of Polished Pebbles' Real Skills, Real Jobs initiative that was developed to address the workforce readiness needs of Chicago's African American and Latina girls and the existing barriers to girls and women of color in the trades, manufacturing, and construction industries. The Polished Pebbles Pink Hard Hat Project supports a pipeline of skilled students and girls for early integration into the skilled trades workforce by providing them with skills training, mentoring, and job shadow experiences while in middle school and high school.

To kick off the experience, JJC will host a career panel and automation lab for 25 students that Polished Pebbles works with at Shoop Academy. Following the workshop, students will have the opportunity to network and interact with various professionals within the automation industry.

"Building a pipeline of interest and future talent for automation is critically important to ensuring long-lasting innovation and success for the industry," says Joe Limon, Professor of Process Controls Instrument Technology program at JJC. "The passion that JJC, ISA, and Polished Pebbles have for fostering the future leaders of automation and setting them up for success is what makes this partnership so special for students and the industry alike."

Vandhana Rabindranath, President of the ISA Will-DuPage chapter, has been another key member in solidifying ISA's connection with JJC and Polished Pebbles. Says Vandhana, "Everyone is excited about bringing the community together to inspire the students to expand their knowledge base of available STEM careers, especially ones that are not commonly considered."

Two former JJC students, Kenedi Gerhardt and Evelina Rickeviciute made history this year by being the first females to graduate from this program.

For more information about the automation experience through JJC, ISA, and Polished Pebbles, contact Vandhana Rabindranath at vrabind1@gmail.com.

About Polished Pebbles

Polished Pebbles - founded by Kelly Fair - is an Illinois Gold Star rated mentoring program that increases the communication skills and employability of young women for the future workplace.

Polished Pebbles helps African-American and Latinx girls aged 7 to 17 years old become effective communicators at home, school, and their future careers. The organization currently serves 500+ girls and young women per school year in Chicago, the Chicagoland area, Indiana, Texas, and North Carolina.

Since its inception in 2009, Polished Pebbles has worked with over 5,000 girls and young women and provided over 500 mentors in hundreds of schools.

Learn more at PolishedPebbles.com