

## **Silicon Valley Congressman Mike Honda Invites STEM Experts to Advance Opportunities for Early Learning STEM**

*Carrie Lynne Draper, Executive Director, Readiness Learning Associates, was invited by Congressman Mike Honda (U.S. Representative California's 17th Congressional District) to be one of four panelists at his briefing on Early Learning STEM Education, second in a three-part series for Members of Congress, their staff and policy stakeholders entitled Education Through the Lens. The "lens" refers to viewing the selected educational topics through the lens of equity in education.*

Building upon the White House Early Learning STEM commitments, Congressman Mike Honda (U.S. Representative California's 17th Congressional District) invited Carrie Lynne Draper, Executive Director, Readiness Learning Associates, to be one of the four panelists at his briefing on Early Learning STEM. Representative Honda and his staff organized the briefing, along with Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (U.S. House of Representative Texas's 18th Congressional District) and her staff. Members of Congress, congressional staff and key stakeholders were in attendance.

The briefing, held in the Capitol Visitor's Center Congressional Auditorium on June 10, 2016, was moderated by Dr. Russell Shilling, Executive Director of STEM for the U.S. Department of Education. The four panelists were: Ms. Draper; Ms. Wendy Brenneman, Manager of Early Childhood STEM Initiatives, Carnegie Science Center, Pittsburgh, PA; Ms. Rudo Kashiri, Education Programs Manager, NASA and Virginia Space Grant Consortium, Hampton, VA ; and Mr. David Lowenstein, Senior Director, Ready to Learn, PBS KIDS Digital, Arlington, VA.

Panelists shared the latest findings and research on how to prepare our youngest learners to create the future; developing opportunities for STEM learning with informal education and community partners; fostering inclusive STEM practices and supporting all families; and the role of public media in STEM learning for children under the age of five.

Congressman Honda is very passionate about working towards equity in education in all areas. One area focuses on ensuring that all children have access to high-quality early learning education. The Department of Education is currently leading in the area of Early Learning STEM, and Congressman Honda hoped to broaden the knowledge of the promising practices in this area on the Hill through this briefing. The panelists deep knowledge and experience in this area make a critical difference in communicating key facets of Early Learning STEM to the Hill audience. The final hearing in this series, will be held on July 12, 2016, and will focus on Global Girls Education.

Ms. Draper shared how young children are born to be innovative thinkers and require certain STEM practices. "Children under the age of five are capable of understanding the nature of science, technology, engineering and math and their applications. They just need a knowledgeable teacher who creates an environment for STEM learning that engages their natural curiosity."

Readiness Learning Associates brings more than thirty years of STEM Readiness Education experience, providing STEM learning for children six months of age through post-secondary and their educators. The organization is based in Los Angeles, CA with an east coast office in Virginia Beach, VA.



For more information regarding the Congressional Series, please contact Congressman Honda's office at 202.225.2631 and [Joanna.hubbard@mail.house.gov](mailto:Joanna.hubbard@mail.house.gov)



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