

# Jessica's Story<sup>®</sup>

JESSICA IS A 4TH GRADE STUDENT LIVING IN THE INNER CITY ATTENDING AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. DOES THE QUESTION EVER ENTER HER MIND THAT SHE WANTS TO BE AN ENGINEER? HOW FAR AWAY IS THIS THOUGHT PROCESS FROM HER CURRENT EVERYDAY REALITY?

A 14-year story must unfold for Jessica to walk across a stage and receive an engineering degree. It's a story that ends up opening doors she never dreamed of, because it begins with awareness, motivation, challenging preparation and committed support every step of the way.

HENAAC refers to this 14-year story as the "Value Chain" in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). This Value Chain must reflect a vision that can capture the spirit and focus of whole communities, children, parents, educators, employers and civic leaders.

The wonderful part of this story is that it can be accomplished. HENAAC has the tools, credibility, and commitment to create a Value Chain and make it work for Jessica and thousands of others like her. Once we have created the Value Chain, we can scale it up in metro areas across the country.

HENAAC's current program line-up, along with other programs in development, provides crucial stepping stones and benchmarks that will give Jessica the awareness, motivation, challenging preparation and continuing support she needs. It includes all willing primary and other key partners, such as parent groups, community coalitions, business groups, STEM education programs, organizations that hire engineers and scientists, and the most dynamic of the partners, the STEM college students and role models themselves. Each and every partner must play a managed role in this Value Chain.

This journey must begin now! The school districts, the university systems and stake holders must play a key and sustaining role to ensure that this 14-year story unfolds for more of our children.

