The SSPEED Center teamed up with the Young Owls Leadership Program (YOLP) at Rice to engage with nearly 60 local high school students through a lecture on the impact of Hurricane Harvey on Houston and why we need a disaster-trained workforce.

After the lecture, the SSPEED Center taught the students about engineering principles through hands-on projects with water rockets and a bridge building activity.

**Bridge Building & Rocket Launching**

The students broke into teams to launch water rockets. Students took an empty soda bottle, filled it with water and used a bike pump to pressurize gas and force the homemade rockets into the air. The goal of the activity was to show the Newton’s third law of motion.

For the bridge building activity, the students used a K'nex construction set to design a bridge structure. The competition was determined by which bridge held the most weight without collapsing. The winning team’s bridge held 37 pounds.

**YOLP Student Testimony**

“I was interested in engineering as a career, but this is my first time to learn more about it,” said Kayla Tavares, a rising sophomore at Worthing High School. “I am glad to have this hands-on experience and opportunity.”

“These activities are showing me the value in learning engineering principals,” said rising sophomore Juan Bercian. “Learning how to build a bridge that can sustain weight is very important as it can injure people if not done properly.”