TECHNOLOGY THRILLS

Watch out Disneyworld and Six Flags! If a young woman at suburban Washington Township High School in Sewell, New Jersey, has her way, visitors to these and other theme parks will someday enjoy the heart-stopping thrills of a ride of her creation.

Stacey Janssen, 18, traces her interest in ride design and engineering to the Design Technology course she took in high school. In the course, Stacey learned to use Pro/DESKTOP® and it opened the world of design and engineering to her in new and exciting ways.

"Pro/DESKTOP lets you create objects that are very realistic," said Stacey. "It's the closest thing to what something would look like if it were actually made."

In class, Stacey's favorite projects included using Pro/DESKTOP to design and build bridges and a machine to make colorful glass marbles. A self-proclaimed pragmatist when it comes to design, Stacey admits she likes "to build things that will complete a task and serve a valuable purpose." But she also has great appreciation for the fun involved.

"If I could build anything with Pro/DESKTOP, I would build a roller coaster," she said. "I'm fascinated with the mechanics of how they work. Someday I hope to pursue a career that involves ride design and how they work."

Stacey plans to attend Virginia Tech University and major in mechanical engineering. While the number of woman pursuing degrees in engineering is growing, it's still relatively small at the undergraduate level: just 21 percent of all engineering degrees and 14 percent of mechanical engineering degrees. It is even more unusual for a young woman right out of high school to choose an engineering career.

"I think more young women would consider careers in engineering if they had an opportunity to study design in school," said Stacey. "This would give them a chance to see that engineering is not just about math calculations. There are many aspects to it. They would also see that the stereotype about the field being only for men isn't true. Women can handle, and be successful in, this field."

PTC's Partnership for Innovative Learning helps educators prepare students to succeed in a technology-driven world and inspire them to design the superior products of tomorrow. Programs for middle, high school and college students provide affordable training, free Pro/DESKTOP and/or Pro/ENGINEER® software, classroom materials, competitions and other teaching resources.

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