



# **science with seniors**



**A Model Program for  
Senior Citizen-Centered  
STEM Outreach**

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# Bad News and Good News

	Agreement among scientists	Agreement among public
“GMOs are generally safe to eat”	88%	37%
Vaccines should be required in childhood	86%	68%
Climate change is a serious issue	94%	65%
Humans are responsible for climate change	87%	50%
Humans have evolved over time	98%	65%

71% of Americans think investment in science pays off!

# STEM Outreach at NU

- Science Club
- Junior Science Club
- Science in the Classroom
- MORE (Mentorship Opportunities for Research Engagement)
- Science Explorers
- HELIX Magazine
- Science Café

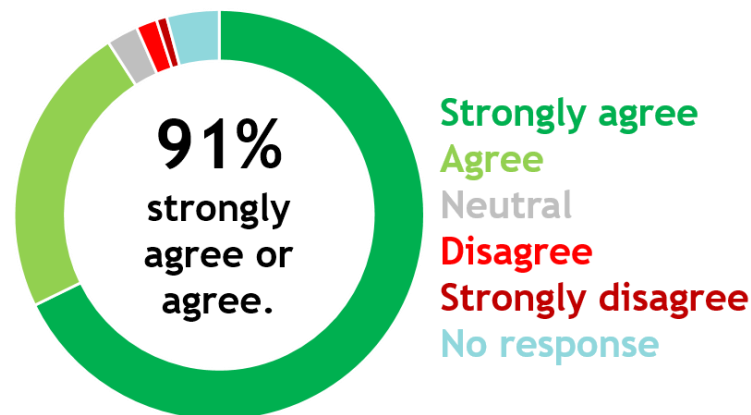


# Senior citizens are important!

## Among Americans ages 65+,

- 90% are registered to vote
- 71% turned out to vote in 2016 (46% for 18-29)
- 21% are “scientifically literate” (29% for all Americans)

I am a consistent voter in local, state,  
and federal elections.

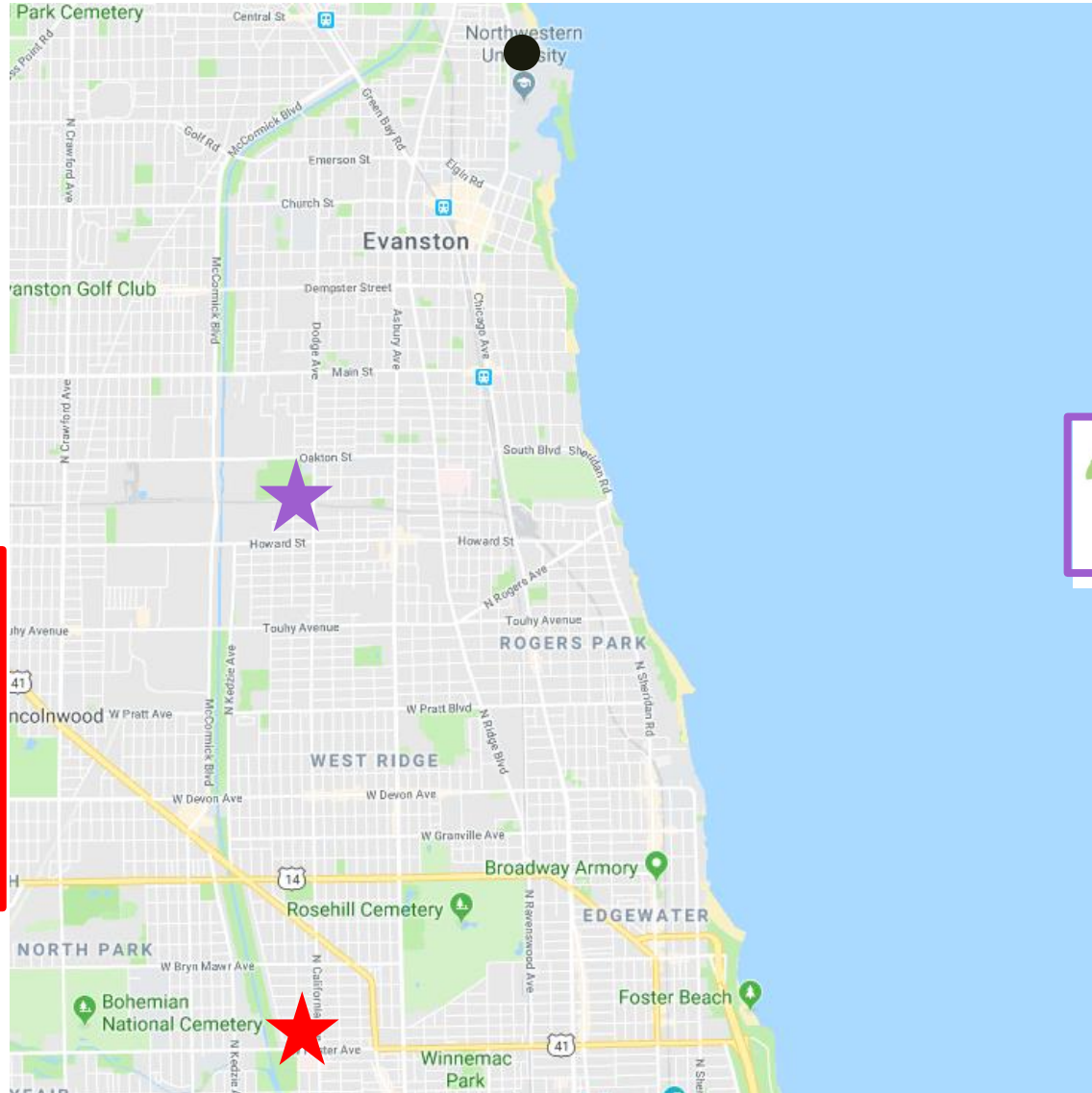


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# Motivation

**How do we ensure that the most civically engaged demographic is scientifically informed?**

# Community Partners



Covenant Home,  
Andersonville



Chicago Methodist  
Senior Services

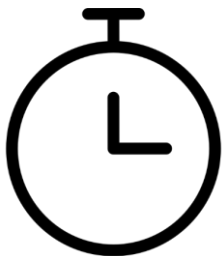


Levy Senior Center  
Foundation

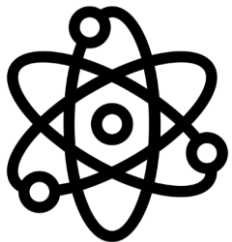
# Interactive Presentations



**Who?** Graduate students and postdoctoral associates from all NU STEM departments.



**When?** We give regular monthly talks at each center. Students prepare 15-20 minute talks on a topic of their choice and we help refine their talks.



**What?** Talks focus on a diverse range of topics, including solar panels, earthquakes, gene therapy, and everything in between.

# Tips for Presenters



Frame your talk around engaging questions.



Tie your topic to current news or policy.



Keep your talk broad and non-technical.

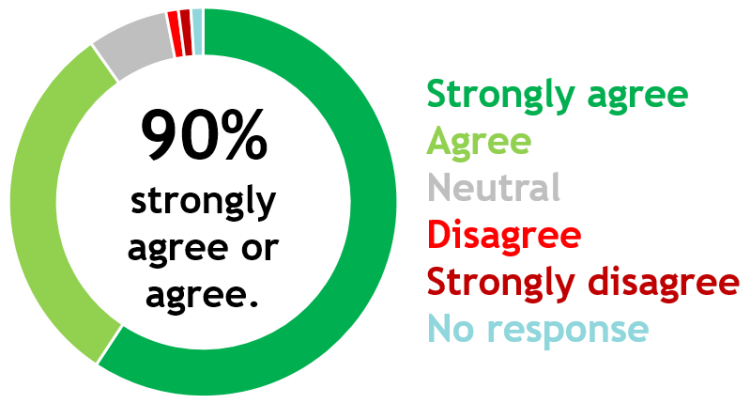


Give historical context for your topic.

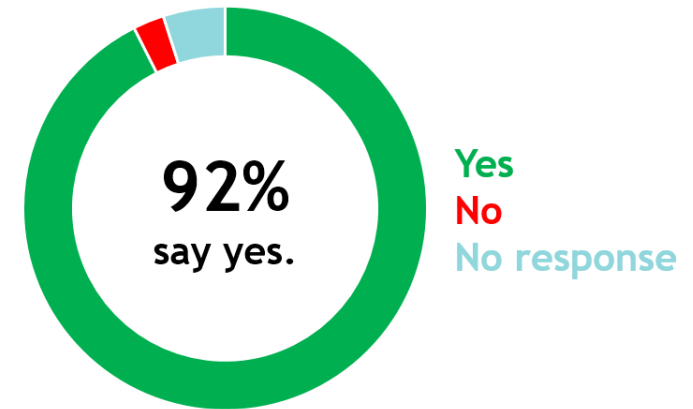


# Outcomes and Feedback

This program increased my understanding of the presented topic.



Would you attend a similar program in the future?



n = 202

Feedback collected from  
Dec 2018 - Dec 2019 at Levy Center

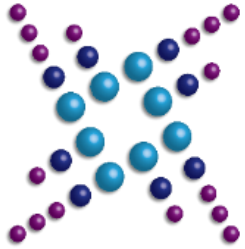
# Lessons Learned

- **Knowing your audience:** Pedagogical to conversational
- **Starting dialogues:** Exposure to new areas of research
- **Tailoring talks:** Valuable experience for presenters talking to a new demographic

# Future Directions

- **Expanding reach:** New partnerships
- **Improving science communication:** Feedback from presenters
- **Engaging the audience:** Presented talks will be made available online

# Thank you!



Materials Research Center  
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SOCIETY FOR  
SCIENCE & THE PUBLIC

Northwestern  

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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

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Learn more!

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