



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Design Squad Hits the Road with Design Squad Nation, Premiering January 26, 2011 on PBS KIDS GO!

**New Series Addresses the Need for Engineering Education by
Encouraging Kids to Dream it. Build it. Live it.**

(Boston, MA, Tuesday, November 16, 2010) – Premiering Wednesday, January 26, 2011 (check local listings), the producers of the Peabody and Emmy Award-winning engineering and reality competition series *Design Squad* take their show on the road with a new spin-off series for ‘tweens, teens, and family-viewing—*Design Squad Nation*. Over 10 episodes, engineer co-hosts Judy Lee and Adam Vollmer travel across the country and around the world, working side by side with kids to turn their dreams into reality. Whether it is a red-carpet worthy gown for *Project Runway*’s Christian Siriano, or a playground for kids in a rural village high in Nicaragua’s northern mountains, *Design Squad Nation* shows that engineering isn’t about hiding away in some lab; it’s about being active in the world, taking risks, collaborating with interesting people, and using science, math, and technology to solve real problems.

Design Squad Nation takes a kid’s passion, combines it with engineering, and shows how to create an array of engineering feats—a cake that is part delicious, part electronic, and part mad scientist for the cast party of *Young Frankenstein: The Musical*; a pedal-powered bike organ; a human-powered flying machine, and more.

Wish you could help the world conserve water? Have a dream of an invention that can improve someone’s life? *Design Squad Nation* shows kids that if they can dream it, they can build it.

In the series premiere, “Apache Skateboarders,” Judy and Adam team up with Ronnie—a 17-year-old skateboarder from the White Mountain Apache Reservation in Whiteriver, Arizona to build a skateboarding street course. Engineered to be modular, durable, and weather-resistant, the skate park includes a pyramid deck, hubbas (ledges to grind on), and “The Wave” (an angled grind box). With the help of *Design Squad Nation*, Ronnie and his friends create a skate park of their dreams.

Major funding



Series funding



NORTHROP GRUMMAN
Foundation

the Lemelson foundation
improving lives through invention

Additional funding

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Celebrating 125 Years
of Engineering the Future

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“More than a TV show, and more than a website, *Design Squad Nation* is a growing community built around the belief that with creative problem-solving and engineering, any kid can make a difference,” says Executive Producer Marisa Wolsky. “Through a network of more than 5,000 engineering and education partners around the country, we are working to make this community bigger and stronger, inspiring a new generation of engineers to dream big and change the world.”

“Kids will see *Design Squad Nation* and be absolutely amazed at all of the different ways that engineering can be a part of their world,” says co-host Adam Vollmer. Adds co-host Judy Lee, “We hope the show and website will get kids thinking about what sorts of problems and challenges they would like to solve, and to see engineering as a way to have fun while innovating for the future.”

Design Squad Nation builds on *Design Squad*’s mission to increase student’s knowledge of engineering and to improve the public image of engineering, especially among girls and minorities. The project is a direct response to the critical societal need to attract more students to engineering and technology studies and careers.

From Design Squad to Design Squad Nation Nation

A reality competition show that was launched in 2007 by the producers of *Zoom* and *FETCH! with Ruff Ruffman*, *Design Squad* had the goal of getting viewers excited about engineering. It worked. After researching the impact of the TV series, website, and educator’s guide, an independent evaluator found a significant jump in young people’s learning and a uniformly positive, enthusiastic response from viewers, educators, and kids. *Design Squad* aired for three seasons and was hosted by Nate Ball.

Shifting away from the reality competition format of *Design Squad*, the *Design Squad Nation* spin-off takes the engineering and building fun of the original series and brings it directly to kids around the country and the globe. From conception to finished product, *Design Squad Nation* combines engineering know-how with kids’ passions to create amazing things that improve people’s lives.

Design Squad Nation Nation Online at pbskidsgo.org/designsquadnation

The *Design Squad Nation* website is a destination for creative ‘tweens and teens, promoting the message: You are creative and can solve problems. You can make things that help people. We want you to join the *Design Squad Nation*. Let’s dream big. Let’s build something together.

On the site, kids can work alongside co-hosts Judy Lee and Adam Vollmer, posting real-life solutions to real-life problems and responding to challenges from the show by sketching and building their own prototypes. The *Design Squad Nation* Blog features inspiring engineering and DIY content from across the Web. The blog will engage with the *Design Squad Nation* community directly by including calls to action,

how-to challenges, aspirational examples of kid-made content on the site, and first-person video and messages from Judy and Adam—sharing both the fun and the failures that are a part of the design process. Already, more than 12,000 kids are engaged, actively creating and sharing content in our online community. *Design Squad Nation* invites the next generation of great thinkers to get involved at pbskidsgo.org/designsquadnation. Viewers also can follow *Design Squad Nation* on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/DesignSquadNation> and on Twitter at twitter.com/designsquad.

About Co-Hosts Judy Lee and Adam Vollmer

Directing the action of *Design Squad Nation* are mechanical engineers Judy Lee and Adam Vollmer.

As a child growing up in Cary, North Carolina, Judy loved taking things apart to see how they work. With the support of her family (her dad is a civil engineer), that love eventually led to a mechanical engineering degree at North Carolina State University. After college, Judy harnessed her engineering skills on a wide range of projects—from designing children’s toys to creating medical devices to providing clean water to slums in Kenya to testing and destroying products to ensure their safety. Prior to her work on *Design Squad Nation*, Judy was profiled on WGBH’s *Engineer Your Life* and will appear in an upcoming segment of NOVA’s *Secret Life of Scientists* and *Engineers* Web series. Judy now works at her dream job as a product designer at IDEO, an international design and innovation firm in Palo Alto, CA. When she’s not onair brainstorming and building, Judy can be found in San Francisco remodeling her new home, growing fresh fruits and veggies in her garden, riding a big wheel down the nation’s windiest street, or playing with her pug, Rosie.

Growing up in Portland, Oregon, Adam wanted to be an astronaut, a LEGO engineer (before he knew what an engineer was), or...a dinosaur hunter. Thanks to a BS in mechanical engineering at Stanford and a MS at MIT, Adam has been able to do most of these things and more. “I played with LEGOs all the way up through grad school. I worked with NASA during the filming of *Design Squad Nation*. But I’m still on the lookout for dinosaurs. I hope to find one soon.” Adam is currently a mechanical engineer at the international design and innovation firm IDEO in Palo Alto, CA. In previous jobs, he’s worked in biotech, designed micro electro-mechanical devices, programmed (and driven) semi-trucks, and built parts for the one of the world’s biggest physics experiments at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center. Outside of work, you’re likely to find Adam on his own handmade bicycle, climbing up a mountain (or skiing down one), or exploring new corners of the world.

Funding for Design Squad Nation

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About WGBH Boston

WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcasting producer—the single largest source of prime-time and children's programming for PBS and pbs.org, one of the most-trafficked dot-org websites in the world. WGBH produces some of public television's best-known lifestyle shows, many public radio favorites, and awardwinning children's programs and websites that empower kids with innovative, entertaining, curriculum-based content. Among the WGBH-produced children's titles: *Arthur*, *Curious George*, *Postcards from Buster*, *Between the Lions*, *Design Squad Nation*, *Martha Speaks*, *FETCH! with Ruff Ruffman*, and *Peep and the Big Wide World*. WGBH also is a pioneer in educational multimedia, and in technologies and services that make media accessible to the 36 million Americans who rely on captioning or video descriptions. WGBH has been recognized with hundreds of honors: Emmys, Peabodys, duPont- Columbia Awards, and even two Oscars. In 2002, WGBH received a special institutional Peabody Award for 50 years of excellence. For more information, go to www.wgbh.org.

About PBS KIDS GO!

PBS KIDS GO! offers all children the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television, online, and community-based programs. PBS is a nonprofit media enterprise owned and operated by the nation's nearly 360 public television stations, serving more than 124 million people on-air and online each month. For more information on specific shows supporting literacy, science, math and more, visit PBS.org/pressroom.

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