

eliminating racism empowering women

ywca press release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago Takes South Side Girls Full STEAM Ahead

Chicago; Dec. 11, 2013 – YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is at the forefront of the national initiative to educate girls and underrepresented minorities in STEAM fields as it kicks off its winter session of TechGyrls this January. TechGyrls is an enrichment program focusing on the topics of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) for girls age nine to 12. For 12 weeks on Saturday mornings, girls work both independently and in teams to learn more about careers in STEAM, participate in hands-on projects that boost their confidence, expose them to new concepts and develop their leadership skills in a supportive, fun environment, designed just for girls!

“The number one thing I like about TechGyrls are the things that they teach us,” says Gabrielle, a currently enrolled TechGyrl student. “A lot of kids don’t get these opportunities and we need them to better our lives.”

The YWCA is working to not only equip Chicago’s South Side with more quality, out-of-school enrichment programs for girls but to also bridge the gap in our country’s ability to compete in a STEAM fueled global economy. TechGyrls is a fun, free program held at the YWCA Parks Francis Center located in Woodlawn at 6600 S. Cottage Grove Ave. See more about TechGyrls.

In the late 1990s, STEM was identified as the means for the United States to “maintain its global leadership,” according to the Committee on Equal Opportunities in Science and Engineering (CEOSE). “America must ensure our citizens can meet the demands of a more scientifically – and technologically – centered world.” By 2018, there will be 1.2 million U.S. job openings in STEM fields (“Occupational employment projections to 2018;” U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; November 2009) and the US is struggling to fill them.

Not only is the United States struggling to adequately educate students in these fields, but a huge part of the population is being left out: girls. A recent report from the U.S. Department of Commerce shows that women make up nearly half of the U.S. workforce. But in 2009, compared to 6.7 million men, there were only

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2.5 million college-educated, working women with degrees in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields. Recent trends, however, suggest that just as science and technology transformed our economy in the last century; art and design will do so in the 21st Century. This is why many innovators of thought have seen fit to incorporate the letter "A" into STEM; transforming it into STEAM.

To learn more about TechGyrls, visit <http://bit.ly/ChiTechGyrls> or parents and educators can plan to attend a pre-session open house that will be held on Tuesday, January 7, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. During this open house, attendees will hear from parents with children in the program, and from girls themselves about how TechGyrls is a fun, exciting program.

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About YWCA Metropolitan Chicago: *Since its founding more than 136 years ago, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago has been committed to serving the needs of women and girls. The YWCA's mission to eliminate racism and empower women is actualized through a large breadth of programs and services. Regardless of race or economic status, the YWCA provides women with the support and tools they need to transform their lives, be confident in their choices and make valuable contributions to their communities. The YWCA's Core programmatic areas include: Economic Empowerment Services, Sexual Violence and Support Services and Early Childhood Services. The YWCA serves almost 150,000 women, children and families annually through these programs. And while the YWCA's services are broad and varied, they are linked by a common thread—a dedication to promoting racial justice and personal empowerment. For more information about how you can support the YWCA, visit <http://www.ywcachicago.org> or contact us at 312-762-2710. You can also find us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ywcachicago>) or Twitter (@YWCACHicago).*