



ENGAGING GIRLS IN STEM

Aspire

The EgGS Initiative Newsletter
Volume I // Fall 2017

Why EgGS?

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It's 2017, half of the college educated workforce are women, but only 29% are pursuing careers in science or engineering despite 74% having expressed interest in STEM (science, engineering, technology, and math) in middle school. We're a non-profit set out to change that.

The EgGS Initiative encourages high school aged girls to engage with and be inspired by STEM professional women to more confidently pursue their own STEM careers.

This year, the EgGS Initiative collaborated with Johnson Controls and The Medical College of Wisconsin for their third and fourth, respectively, Prep-Pro (Preparing to be Professional) Workshops where 28 high schools surrounding Milwaukee County sent over 210 girls to participate. There, the girls met in small groups with women role models from 17 local businesses including Johnson Controls, Harley Davidson, Northwestern Mutual, Cr Hansen, Rockwell, and many more.

“I believe this experience will be life-altering providing the girls the opportunity to understand that they can be accepted into a STEM career.”

The workshop simulates a professional association meeting including round-table discussions. Each student has the chance to speak with multiple professionals from a range of careers. It is also an opportunity to meet girls from area schools who share similar academic and professional goals.

The workshop includes: lunch and breakout sessions on networking techniques, interviewing skills, effective use of social media, and building your professional brand.

A science teacher at Verita High said on the workshop, “My students found the workshop to be very helpful... I believe this experience will be life-altering providing the girls the opportunity to understand that they can be accepted into a STEM career.”



2017 Prep-Pro Workshop at Johnson Controls

Meet Our Partner



Wisconsin Education Innovation (WEI) believes they are the most effective when they partner on behalf of students and teachers. They are always looking for ways to partner with schools and other agencies actively involved in education. Their goal is to continue to discover what makes a vibrant educational system, which they believe is by always finding out what is current, and is what led them to their partnership with us. When Terry Weingrod, recently retired Executive Director of WEI, sat down with EgGS founder Todd Herbert she immediately recognized the current importance of engaging young women in STEM.

In 2015, Terry made a connection between EgGS' mission and statistics that reveal the struggle to fill jobs in science and engineering fields. Pursuing a STEM career isn't just a hypothetical scenario, it's a reality that when these women graduate there is a career waiting for them. WEI and EgGS are working today to ensure this reality for women.

WEI is a great partner for EgGS because they bring to the table what EgGS lacks, which includes an extensive background of putting on big events, that Terry says they have down to a science. They have helped streamline the beginning process of what had already been implemented by our founders. They help register girls through their website, run money through their account process, and help make connections with people WEI has aligned with for years. Both WEI and EgGS see this partnership as a symbiotic relationship.

Insight from Terry Weingrod

“People gravitate towards EgGS because everyone is interested in raising up the belief of what girls are capable of doing, especially in STEM.”

“Todd and Jody are able to tap into the enthusiasm of teachers and students to meet actual professionals while tapping into the passion of the professionals to give back to their community and to raise up young women to enter into fields that they feel are underrepresented by women right now.”

“EgGS’ is providing the real life application of what most students learn in school.”



How to Get Your Students Interested in EgGS: Advice from a teacher



The primary way we can get girls interested in EgGS is going through their teachers. Meet Brenda Ness, an academic support teacher at Waukesha West High School. Ms. Ness has noticed a lack at the secondary level of engaging the whole child with whatever other talents they wish to pursue. Because of this, she is always looking to provide her students with opportunities like EgGS, which shows students what exists for them beyond school.

Ms. Ness has sent her students to every Prep-Pro workshop to date. She considers EgGS a hub for providing her students with what she calls “cultural capital,” which encourages students to think about their career, culture, connections, and inspirations.

“EgGS provides the ability to connect directly with professionals in fields they [students] have never heard of,” says Ms. Ness. “And if you don't know about a field, or someone in that field, in particular someone that might look like you or might have a path like you, you can't envision yourself being in that field, especially noting the diversity among the role-models, which includes women of color.”

Ms. Ness has found the best way to get students excited about EgGS is by promoting it through relevant clubs and classrooms. But what she says helps a lot is promoting through established relationships with students. A lot of science teachers could simply suggest the idea of coming to a workshop on a Saturday with them, but without a relationship between teacher and student, it's hard to develop interest.



“There are no limitations to what you can do. Don't allow anyone to box you into a career or a mindset that limits what you do. Believe in who you are.”
- Dr. Linda Rivers

A Question for Ms. Ness: What does EgGS provide for students that schools are lacking?

“I find my students lack the information about these fields, knowing people in these fields, how to get to them, and the belief in themselves. So providing that belief in them so they can believe in themselves is a big part of what I try to do and why EgGS is such a great organization to introduce students to. In school they get the books, they get the curriculum, but they don't get the real life application, examples, information, and people, that can provide that. At the workshops, students are not only learning the information about what these fields are, but they see real people doing them and they can begin to connect the dots about how they can get to be in these positions.”

A Quick Guide to Networking

Insight by Debbie Rudan and Mary Becker

Most businesses know that, in spite of massive advertising and promotion, word-of-mouth advertising is a formidable marketing channel. It can kill a product in the marketplace – or be responsible for its success. The same is true in using networking to get your message out – consistently, frequently and to as many people as possible. You will do this through emails and resumes, but the single most effective way is by talking to people.

One of the major lessons we hope the girls that attend our Prep-Pro workshop learn is the importance of networking. During the workshop this year, we had an entire break-out session on ‘how to network’ put on by **Mary Becker and Debbie Rudan** of **Lee Hecht Harrison**, a company that focuses on helping other companies simplify the complexities of leadership and workplace transformation. At the workshop they shared a lot of great information that we’d like to briefly share here.

1. The Benefits of Relationship Networking

- Talking with people to get your message out is an important communication skill, and it will also become a part of everything you will be doing throughout your life! Conversations that are part of the normal maintenance of your relationship network are ideally suited for gathering information and getting your message out to others.
- The members of your immediate relationship network, such as relatives, friends and close acquaintances, undoubtedly have an interest in talking with you. You already have a shared interest that easily can be expanded to conversations about organizations and mutual business matters. They usually are willing to introduce you to people in their own relationship networks.

“Statistics show that 80% of jobs are obtained through networking, and although you will have a great educational background, success in the job comes from who you know as much as what you know!”

2. Why is Getting Your Message Out Important?

- **It makes you known.** You may still be one of the best-kept secrets around. You need to get your message out about your qualifications and availability.
- **Word-of-mouth advertising is essential to your success.** People talking to people is still one of the most effective forms of advertising.
- **You determine what message goes out.** You’re probably the topic of a conversation right now. When the talk about you is positive, it is because you managed your reputation and provided information that differentiates you from others.
- **You are managing your relationships and network to achieve your goals!**

5. If you continue to build and expand your network, the benefits will be enormous! It will help you to:

- Be certain that your objective is realistic and obtainable.
- Know which organizations, cultures and environments will be a good fit for you.
- Present yourself to others as knowledgeable and interesting.
- Be seen as someone who understands the power of relationships and the mutual benefits you share in those relationships.

“Start networking now to build relationships that will provide a lifetime of benefits!”

3. Questions to Explore

- What does my personal brand convey to others?
- Who among my professional and industry contacts and former colleagues can I contact for information, referrals and ideas?
- Am I listed on LinkedIn or other social networking sites? How can I leverage this resource?
- What professional and industry associations am I involved with or can I get involved with to demonstrate my knowledge and skills and meet people who might be helpful?
- Who has been a source of career guidance in the past that I could discuss my goals with?

4. Suggested Actions for making networking work for you!

- Use social media networking! Definitely use LinkedIn, but also consider Facebook, Twitter and your industry-specific sites.
- Contact 10 people initially by email, phone or in person. Add 10+ new people a week.
- Use these contacts to continue to gather marketplace information. Discuss your brand and marketing plan as appropriate.
- If you like public speaking, find opportunities to share your expertise with others while making your name and capabilities more visible in the marketplace.
- Follow up with contacts on a regular basis, updating them on your progress and the results of their referrals.

Getting to Know a Role-Model: Meet Arie Carpenter, Sr QC Microbiologist



Because Arie has been a part of the workshops from the beginning, she's identified significant growth in how they operate. She's noticed a lot more diversity within the participants, as well as a higher interest in the girls of not just hearing from the mentors but also from each other.

"It just seems overall more relaxed, which is great because if you can make it a comfortable environment, where students feel comfortable networking with each other, that's a whole new level of takeover the world."

Her advice to young girls interested in pursuing STEM careers is, "Network. While grades and the stuff that you know are important, your curiosity about the world around you and how it works and meeting people that support that curiosity is more important than anything else you could possibly do. Starting on the path to your career is a lot of going out and trying new things to see what works for you and what doesn't.

"You should take internships, think about the skillsets that you want to learn rather than the job that you want to have. But really, it's all about the people you're meeting, the connections you're making, and maintaining those connections."

What makes the Prep-Pro workshops so unique is the opportunity for the girls to sit down in small groups with professional women already established in their own STEM careers. We think it's important for the girls to get to a comfortable point with a role-model so that they ask questions and engage in conversation freely.

We wanted to highlight Arie Carpenter, the senior quality control microbiologist at CHR Hansen. She's been a part of every workshop since the inaugural year and found out about EgGS initially through her senior technical scientist who suggested Arie get involved.

What attracted Arie from the start dates back to when she was the student's age; she wishes she had something like EgGS when she was deciding her career path. "It would have been really nice to know what types of opportunities are out there, so it's really important to me that anyone growing up knows about them," Carpenter says.

Fun Facts About Arie Carpenter

What was your favorite TV show growing up?

A "Inspector Gadget was my very favorite because it was Penny, the girl, who would say there were better ways of fixing the problems. For me it all comes back to the idea of problem solving."



What were you involved in during High School?

A "Stage crew. I learned how to build sets, which was awesome and I can still build a bookshelf if I need to. I was really involved in the arts rather than the sciences, actually."



Do you have any pets?

A "I do! My husband and I adopted two brother cats a little over 6 months ago. They're super naughty but they're my favorites."



What's your favorite album?

A "Tori Amos, *Little Earthquakes*. But man that's hard, that's like picking a favorite child."



If you could go anywhere in the world where would you go?

A "I really want to take an extended vacation in Italy and take cooking classes there. They take you for 3 months and teach you all of these techniques; I would love to do that."



About the Founders

The EgGS Initiative was founded in 2014 by Todd and Jody Herbert, both retired educators, whose vision is that every high school girl interested in a STEM career be able to pursue her professional dream with passion and confidence. Jody Herbert says, “A good role model can change your life. Giving high school girls a chance to work with successful women in STEM professions will help them forge a successful career path of their own.”

Co-Founders, Jody and Todd Herbert at 89.7 WUWM after their interview. Full story [here](#).



Thank You to Our Hosts

We'd like to thank Johnson Controls and The Medical College of Wisconsin for hosting our 2017 Prep-Pro workshops. Without their contributions to our organization, we would not have been able to pull off our first year of multiple workshops. Thank you to all of the volunteers from both Johnsons Controls and the Medical College for allowing the days to run smoothly and encourage fun.



Tamara Watkins speaking to the students at the Jhonson Controls event on 4/1/2017

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