

# News from the Connecticut Science Center



Third graders at Betances STEM Magnet School in Hartford, one of our school partners.

## Awards for Achievement in STEM Innovation and Education

From pay phones to the aerospace industry to biotechnology, Connecticut has a proud tradition of invention and innovation. The Connecticut Science Center annually issues an award in recognition of one individual and one organization for outstanding contributions in the fields of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and STEM education.

This year's winners, Mark Dixon and the Connecticut Pre-Engineering Program, will receive their awards at a breakfast held in their honor at the Connecticut Science Center on Tuesday, May 5, 2015. ■



Above right: Mark Dixon of WFSB, a champion for science education in Connecticut. Above: CPEP has inspired underrepresented groups to pursue STEM since 1986.



Connecticut Science Center

The Connecticut Science Center inspires lifelong learning through interactive and innovative experiences that explore our changing world through science.

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS:

**Liquid Lounge:  
Dino de Mayo**  
Friday, May 1 at 6PM



**The Power & Promise of Stem Cell Research:  
An Evening with Caroline Dealy**  
Wednesday, June 10 at 6PM

**Cocktails, BBQ &  
Fireworks**  
Saturday, July 11 at 7PM

**The Green Gala**  
Saturday, September 26 at 7:30PM

## Introducing Women in Science



As young children, both girls and boys are natural scientists. They ask questions, investigate, and explore the world around them. Fast forward to adulthood, where the STEM workforce includes far fewer women than men. What happened? Studies debunked the notion that girls are less skilled than boys in science and math years ago; on the contrary, girls and boys show equal aptitude and interest in science as youngsters. Somewhere between childhood and adulthood, girls self-select out of STEM.



Above: Our STEM Educator, Lyn Wojcik

## Meet STEM Educator Lyn Wojcik

With a Bachelor of Arts in Geology and training in secondary science education, STEM Educator Lyn Wojcik tackles teaching with passion. By balancing structured and free exploration and taking the time to get to know each student, Lyn provides a safe learning environment that allows each child to learn at his or her own pace. Each day she spends in the New London Public School system brings countless “Aha!” moments from students, who perhaps even an hour earlier hadn’t realized that they could be scientists, too! ■

### Women in Science continued

STEM job opportunities are expanding and typically pay higher salaries than similar jobs in other fields. Each woman who opts out of the sciences takes with her unique ideas and talents that could have benefited the STEM fields and society as a whole.

The Science Center is committed to diversifying STEM through memorable moments to encourage the next generation of women to enter, and stay in, STEM. Through our Women in Science initiative, we provide programs for girls to remind them that science is exciting, connect girls and young women to near-peer and professional role models, and host events and discussions that allow women in the STEM fields to share their expertise with the community while connecting with other STEM professionals.

The Women in Science initiative is made possible with support from our founding sponsor, The Petit Family Foundation. ■



Right: Jessica Tatarczuk, Chair of U. S. Women in Nuclear - Windsor, CT Chapter teaching our guests how to make candy nuclear reactors during a Women in Science Saturday Science program.

## Extending Opportunity in New London

Each day, five days a week, Connecticut Science Center STEM Educators Lyn Wojcik and Chris Zachau are greeted by exuberant second-graders at the Extended Day Program at Winthrop Elementary Magnet School in New London. Lyn and Chris work intensively with four second grade classes during their last hour of school, exploring topics ranging from states of matter to engineering challenges.

By presenting hands-on content within a flexible structure that leaves room for creativity, Lyn and Chris help Winthrop Elementary’s budding scientists to refine their observation, design, and presentation skills. These key capabilities are integral to each student’s ability to explore a diverse set of weekly challenges, such as making lava lamps powered by Alka-Seltzer and launching frozen CO<sub>2</sub> from air blasters.

The Science Center’s work at Winthrop is one small element of a district-wide partnership with New London Public Schools that, since 2012, has combined these student enrichment programs with teacher professional development at the Science Center’s Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers. Each teacher and school administrator at Winthrop has now participated in transformative learning experiences with Science Center educators. The result is a measurable impact on student performance, an increased enthusiasm for science, and some very big smiles. ■



Above: Our STEM Educator Chris Zachau addressing Winthrop students; a Winthrop student shows off her project.



Thank you for your support of the Connecticut Science Center.

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