



Media Contact:

Tracy Shirer (tshirer@ctsciencecenter.org)

O: 860.520.2116, C: 860.817.1373

Connecticut Science Center | 250 Columbus Blvd | Hartford, CT 06103

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Connecticut Science Center Announces 2018 STEM Achievement Awards ***The Science Center will honor Dr. Michele Dischino, Sharon Gusky, and the Girl Scouts of Connecticut at annual award breakfast April 24***

HARTFORD, CT (March 30, 2018) – At its annual award breakfast, the Connecticut Science Center will celebrate individuals and organizations in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) who share in the mission of lifelong learning through interactive and innovative experiences that explore our changing world through science. Along with the Science Center’s STEM Achievement Awards, the Petit Family Foundation Women in Science Leadership Award is presented to a female leader who makes a significant effort to support other women and encourage girls’ interests in STEM. The event is generously presented by Stanley Black & Decker, with support from the Girl Scouts of Connecticut.

This year’s honorees include Dr. Michele Dischino, professor at Central Connecticut State University; Sharon Gusky, professor at Northwestern Connecticut Community College; and the Girl Scouts of Connecticut. Selected by the Science Center’s Women in Science Steering Committee and STEM Awards Selection Committee, the honorees were selected from numerous nominations submitted by the public.

“Through public nominations, the STEM Achievement Awards allows not only us, but the community as a whole, to acknowledge fantastic individuals and organizations in STEM,” said Matt Fleury, President and CEO of the Connecticut Science Center. “Our honorees, Michele, Sharon, and the Girl Scouts of Connecticut, along with our finalists, represent a group of truly remarkable individuals who are shaping our community as well as our future workforce.”



Michele Dischino, Ph.D., is the 2018 Petit Family Foundation Women in Science Leadership Award honoree. Dr. Dischino is a Professor of Technology and Engineering Education at Central Connecticut State University, where she teaches courses in a variety of science, technology, engineering and math subjects. She served as co-principal investigator on two NSF-funded grants through which she developed problem-based learning curricula used by educators throughout the U.S. and internationally. As an engineer drawn to education, she has a passion for delivering high-impact experiences to students that serve as examples of the many ways in which engineers can make the world a better place. Dr. Dischino received her Ph.D. in Bioengineering from the

University of Pennsylvania and her B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Manhattan College.

“As our 2018 honoree, Dr. Michele Dischino has inspired many to embrace STEM careers by creating effective methods of learning. We are pleased to recognize her achievements as well as her dedication to supporting the community of women and girls in these fields,” said Marie O’Brien, Chair of the Women in Science Steering Committee



2018 STEM Achievement Award Individual Honoree, **Sharon Gusky** is a biology professor at Northwestern Connecticut Community College and is actively involved in providing professional development opportunities for educators. She is a founding member and current president of the Connecticut Association of Biology Teachers, a founding member and current chair of the Connecticut Community College Biology Faculty Association, and a founding Fellow of the Partnership for Undergraduate Life Science Education. Gusky is the state-wide chair for the Community Colleges' Center for Teaching. She serves on the Small World Initiative's Training and Mentoring committee, is a community college liaison to the

NSF funded Evalu-ATE Center and participates in the Prevalence of Antibiotic Resistance in the Environment Project.



The **Girl Scouts of Connecticut** is this year's STEM Achievement Award Organization Honoree. Founded in October of 2007, the Girl Scouts of Connecticut stay true to the original Girl Scouts vision of building “girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.” Currently the largest youth organization in the state, the Girl Scouts of

Connecticut provides programs focused on leadership development for girls aged 5 through 17 years old.

“Michelle, Sharon, and the Girl Scouts of Connecticut exemplify what it takes to educate and inspire the future generation of STEM.” Said Dr. William A. Petit Jr. “One of the main focus areas of the Petit Family Foundation is the education of young people, especially women in the sciences. Giving this platform to our honorees offers representation to a large group of young women looking for their place in STEM.”

The Connecticut Science Center congratulates and thanks all 2018 finalists including: Women in Science Leadership Award finalists, **Dr. Marja Hurley**, University of Connecticut School of Medicine and **Dr. Elaine Hee-Lee**, University of Connecticut; STEM Achievement Award Individual finalists, **Frederic Klein**, Pullman & Comley, LLC, and **Ishita Mukerji**, Wesleyan University; and STEM Achievement Award Organization finalists, **Boehringer Ingelheim** and **Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame**.

Tickets are \$40 for the general public and \$35 for Connecticut Science Center Members and Corporate Member Employees. Tickets are on sale now and may be purchased online. For more information about the 2018 STEM Achievement Awards, presented by Stanley Black & Decker with support from the Girl Scouts of Connecticut, please visit CTScienceCenter.org/awards/.

###

About the Connecticut Science Center: The LEED-Gold certified Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, sparks creative imagination and an appreciation for science by immersing visitors in fun and educational hands-on, minds-on interactive experiences while maintaining an environmentally conscious presence. Serving over 2.5 million people since opening in 2009, the Science Center features more than 165 exhibits in ten galleries. Covering a range of topics, including space and earth sciences, physical sciences, biology, the Connecticut River watershed, alternative energy sources, Connecticut inventors and innovations, a children's gallery, and much more. Other features include four educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, function room, gift store, and ongoing events for all ages. The Science Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England, providing learning opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration. The Connecticut Science Center is also the home to the **Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers**, offering powerful Professional Development for educators. More information: **CTScienceCenter.org** or (860) SCIENCE.