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Connecticut Science Center Launches STEM Career Connections

The Hartford and Cognizant U.S. Foundation Lead Supporters In New Comprehensive Initiative to Engage Students, Strengthen Connecticut's Workforce Pipeline

The Connecticut Science Center today announced "STEM Career Connections," a comprehensive new initiative designed to inspire students in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), setting them on a path to careers in today's economy. The Science Center has a rich history of engaging young people from a diversity of backgrounds, and with the launch of "STEM Career Connections," will work to inspire and equip students to pursue the many STEM career opportunities across Connecticut. "STEM Career Connections" will bring STEM-related career information and skills-building opportunities to over 50,000 people through June 2020.

The STEM Career Connections exhibition and programming is designed to introduce students to opportunities in STEM and deepen their knowledge of STEM-related careers. Studies have shown that an early interest in STEM is a strong indicator of students' success and pursuit of a career in STEM fields, and that out-of-school time can play a role in sparking and maintaining interest throughout the early years of schooling and lead to an interest in STEM degrees.

"Every child has the potential to have a STEM career, no matter his or her background. This initiative offers game-changing potential for the state, creating individual opportunity as it boosts our economy. We look forward to developing future matches of well-prepared prospective employees with a growing number of businesses specifically seeking the talent and expertise to grow in Connecticut, or relocate to Connecticut, and thrive here," said Connecticut Science Center President & CEO Matt Fleury.

Lead corporate financial support for the student-centered STEM Career Connections is being provided by The Hartford and Cognizant U.S. Foundation, with additional support from individual, foundation, and corporate donors.

"We view this important initiative as an investment in Hartford's future," said Diane Cantello, Vice President of Corporate Sustainability at The Hartford. "It is vital that we give the youth in our communities every opportunity to be successful as technology continues to transform the workplace. The Connecticut Science Center's expanded focus on the STEM fields is the right emphasis at the right time, and we are proud to be a part of this innovative educational program."

"We are thrilled to partner with The Hartford and the Connecticut Science Center to empower students with the skills, exposure, and education to pursue STEM disciplines," said Meera Krishnamurthy, Cognizant U.S Foundation Board Member and Senior Vice President and Strategic Business Unit Leader for Insurance, North America at Cognizant. "STEM Career Connections is a great development for our community, our families, and our economy."

"We've long said, 'You can't be what you can't see.' And today, the Connecticut Science Center is partnering with some of the region's top employers to help students across the state see their futures in STEM," added Kristen Titus, Executive Director of the Cognizant U.S. Foundation. "We are excited to join forces with The Hartford to make this work a reality and propel today's students into tomorrow's workforce."



The STEM Career Connections initiative is launching as Connecticut's economy has seen an increase in STEM-related jobs, particularly those in the areas of advanced manufacturing, insurtech, healthcare, and other technology fields. These opportunities are likely to grow, driven by new innovations and high demand for technology-related roles across an increasing number of industries, as well as projections of even greater need as a significant portion of the current technology workforce reaches retirement age. These jobs will require analytic, team-oriented, and problem solving skills that come with STEM-based education and have application across many industries and fields.

STEM Career Connections will more fully integrate STEM-related content throughout the Connecticut Science Center exhibitions, programming calendar and across the full portfolio of program offerings. The initiative will also encourage and enhance partnerships and collaborations with STEM industry businesses, building on existing relationships and establishing new, mutually-beneficial associations that will benefit the region's diverse population of young people.

"Children who attend the Science Center have the potential to fill many of these jobs – but only if they are aware of and prepared for them," Fleury noted. "That is what our STEM Career Connections is all about - helping boys and girls take possession of STEM and creative, innovative learning and problem-solving skills as their own, and helping them and their caretakers carry them forward into a future of possibility. We are grateful to our program partners for sharing our vision of the unlimited potential of this initiative."

The Connecticut Science Center plans to reach not only children but also the parents, grandparents, caregivers, and teachers who strongly influence these young thinkers as they look ahead to their futures. Science Center members also receive STEM-related career information throughout the year. Overall, the initiative will be a comprehensive effort designed to inform, engage, and energize young people and those around them. The major new initiative is being launched as part of the year-long observance of the 10th anniversary of the Connecticut Science Center.

The Connecticut Science Center programs and exhibits that will be integrated with the STEM Career Connections include: live, public presentations in the Science Center's exhibit galleries; Women in Science programs; teen programs; summer and vacation camps; traveling programs, which go to schools, libraries and community centers throughout the state; Science Center lab experiences during school field trips; and applicable portions of the Mandell Academy for Teachers professional development programs. STEM career information is woven into Science Center camp and youth programs, and teen program participants meet STEM professionals and entrepreneurs from Downtown Hartford's innovation community. The Science Center has also launched a series of STEM Career Showcase events where students experience 1-on-1 interactions with STEM professionals, educators, and counsellors who inform them about academic paths to STEM careers.

Given the employment and career potential of these fields, sustaining student interest can be pivotal to a growing, thriving 21st century economy. Consistent engagement, as envisioned in STEM Career Connections, is an important aspect of increasing the number of students who pursue these pathways and arrive at the end of the workforce pipeline fully prepared to step into opportunity. STEM Career Connections aims to move these coordinated efforts front and center.

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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 more than 3.25 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 the state's only year-round butterfly habitat, five 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.

About The Hartford: The Hartford is a leader in property and casualty insurance, group benefits and mutual funds. With more than 200 years of expertise, The Hartford is widely recognized for its service excellence, sustainability practices, trust and integrity. More information on the company and its financial performance is available at <https://www.thehartford.com>. Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/TheHartford [PR](#).

About Cognizant U.S. Foundation: The Cognizant U.S. Foundation is a 501(c)(3) private foundation supporting STEM education and skills training across the United States. Launched in 2018 with an initial \$100 million investment from Cognizant, the Foundation has since awarded \$12 million to organizations working to educate and train the next generation of workers in communities throughout the U.S. Learn more at: <https://cognizantusfoundation.org>.

Note to Editor

Academic research and studies referred to:

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