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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Connecticut Science Center to Launch *Technovation Girls Connecticut 2020* on January 18; Young Women Ages 10-18 Invited to Participate**

*Students Will Work in Teams to Develop Mobile Apps That Address Real-World Challenges; Science Center Will Also Host Regional Pitch Event in International Program in Spring*

Young women between the ages of 10-18 who have an interest in learning the basics of coding and becoming part of a community of innovators and aspiring entrepreneurs are invited to the Connecticut Science Center on Saturday, January 18, 2020, 10:00 – 1:30, for the launch of *Technovation Girls Connecticut 2020*.

*Technovation Girls Connecticut 2020* at the Connecticut Science Center is part of the world's largest free coding and tech entrepreneurship program for girls. It equips young women (ages 10-18) to become tech entrepreneurs and leaders. With the support of volunteer mentors, girls work in teams of 1 to 5 students to code mobile apps that address real-world problems in their communities. No prior coding experience is necessary to join and participate.



There are more than 100 Technovation Girls chapters across the United States and worldwide. The Connecticut Science Center hosts Connecticut's only chapter. Girls participate in either the junior division, for ages 10-14, or the senior division, for ages 15-18. The program uses a three-part model that helps girls and families develop greater self-efficacy and reduce any hesitancy towards Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM): identifying real-world problems, building a team to brainstorm and share the workload, and encouraging community involvement.

On January 18, the launch day program at the Connecticut Science Center will feature a keynote address from Alice Margie Turner, an award-winning Educator, Social Entrepreneur, Ed Tech App Inventor and Founder of Urban Tekk, a technology-focused social enterprise. Based in North Hartford's Promise Zone, it is Connecticut's first and only inner-city technology and enterprise center for urban youth and their families. Eileen Redmond, President of the Connecticut Chapter of the User Experience Professionals' Association (UXPA) will lead a design thinking/ideation process activity.

"Recent data indicate that within the next decade, there will be 15,000 computer-related jobs in software and IT in Connecticut, and not nearly enough graduates from computer science programs to fill them. Connecticut is leaping ahead in computer science career opportunities, but we must dramatically accelerate our talent pipeline," said Connecticut Science Center President & CEO, Matt Fleury. "The Technovation Girls program is a terrific opportunity for girls throughout our region to connect, create and collaborate with focused young people who are on their way to becoming our future leaders in science, technology and engineering."

Students interested in participating are asked to RSVP in advance of the event; a continental breakfast & lunch will be provided for participants. Questions may be directed to Amy Sailor, Advancement Program Manager at the Connecticut Science Center, at [asailor@ctsciencecenter.org](mailto:asailor@ctsciencecenter.org) or 860-520.2163.

After teams are formed during the January 18 launch, they will continue to meet independently throughout the coming months. The program will culminate with a regional event in June, to be hosted by the Connecticut Science Center for the first time. In previous years, the apps developed addressed societal problems including the environment, elderly care and compassion, animal adoption, learning disabilities, equality, drug addiction, food safety, and more. The

mentors working with the teams of girls participating in the program are volunteering their time to support the teams' app development.

Girls who complete Technovation express a greater interest in technology and leadership; 80% of students are more confident in their ability to solve problems and 58% of program alumni worldwide enroll in more computer science courses after Technovation. This is the 10th year of Technovation worldwide, which will culminate in the annual Technovation World Pitch Summit, to be held in this year in Boston in August.

The Connecticut Science Center's participation in the Technovation Girls program is a component of its Women in Science initiative, a multi-faceted endeavor in association with the Petit Family Foundation, and the STEM Career Connections program, a comprehensive initiative launched last year by the Connecticut Science Center to inspire students in the STEM fields, setting them on a path to careers in today's – and tomorrow's - economy.

The Women in Science initiative encourages girls and young women to pursue studies and career paths in the STEM fields and celebrates the achievements of women in the sciences. The initiative seeks to bridge the gender gap in STEM by developing original programming to engage girls in science and to build the community of women in the sciences. Additional support for Women in Science is provided by Voya Financial and Vistra Energy. Support for STEM Career Connections is provided by The Hartford and Cognizant U.S. Foundation

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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 the home to the **Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers**, offering powerful professional development for educators. *More information:* [CTScienceCenter.org](http://CTScienceCenter.org) or (860) SCIENCE.