



A Southeastern Massachusetts  
Public Higher Education  
Partnership

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## SOUTHEAST MA STEM NETWORK HOSTS ENVISION THE FUTURE PROGRAM

Forty eight girls, stemming from seventeen local communities within the CONNECT Partnership's catchment area will be participating in a week-long residential STEM program, which started today!

Bridgewater, MA, July 20, 2015– The CONNECT Partnership, in collaboration with the SE Mass STEM Network, is sponsoring Envision the Future, a five-day residential program for girls, ages 11-13, who are STEM enthusiasts. The program is designed to foster interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields by modeling effective practices. It will provide opportunities for girls to engage in challenging STEM activities, explore career options with STEM professionals, meet women role models in STEM fields, and connect with other girls who have similar interests and aspirations.

In order for the girls to participate in this program, they were required to complete an application, which was reviewed by their community team. Since replication is a critical component of this program, each girl will be supported by members of their team, who will observe program elements, throughout the week. During upcoming academic year, team members from Attleboro, Avon, Brockton, Canton, Dennis- Yarmouth, Easton, Falmouth, Foxboro, Mansfield, Newton, Norton, Plymouth, Silver Lake, Somerset, Wareham, Wellesley and Weymouth, will replicate a component of Envision the Future, in their schools. Key

program elements include: workshops, activities and a meet and greet session. The three focus areas of the workshop study include: **Solve it**- Biotechnology- Using DNA to solve a crime; **Create It**- Computing- Creating mobile apps and video games; and **Build It**- Engineering- Building a Remotely operated vehicle. The week's activities, which will be presented by professional educators, business leaders and community organizations include: Earthview, designing balloon cars, programming robots, creating mobile apps, making DNA models, writing through the Women Heroes Writing Project, studying historical achievements of women in STEM, and developing STEM career paths. Meet and Greet is an engaging session, which will be used to inspire the next generation of women leaders, using speed networking and other activities with women STEM professionals. During this session, participants will also have the opportunity to explore careers with women STEM professionals.

A highlight of the Envision the Future opening ceremony was a visit by Massachusetts Congressman Joseph Kennedy. During his opening remarks, Congressman Kennedy shared the following, "With only a quarter of STEM jobs in our country filled by women, we are ignoring the potential of an entire segment of our population to shape and strengthen our economic future." He continued by adding, "Through programs like Envision the Future, we can address that dramatic disconnect by sparking an interest in STEM fields for girls at a young age. I thank the Southeastern Massachusetts STEM Network for their unwavering belief in each of their students and for their tireless work to inspire the next generation of STEM workers in our Commonwealth."

On Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, Envision the Future participants will share the knowledge they've gained, during the SE Mass STEM Network's annual Resource Fair. The STEM Resource fair provides the opportunity to join hundreds of STEM stakeholders including parents, educators (early childhood and K-16), and representatives of business, government and community organizations. Participants can gather resources, connect with potential STEM partners, access hands-on lesson plans, learn about promising practices, and network. Activities and information will focus on aligning workforce and education; integrating STEM, arts, humanities, and fitness; community STEM initiatives; career and college readiness; and STEM literacy for all students. If you would like to participate in the STEM Resource fair, please navigate to <http://www.connectsemass.org/stem/> to register.

Following the resource fair, the Envision the Future participants will participate in closing ceremony activities, which include a certificate presentation by Bridgewater State University President, Fred Clark, Esq. and University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth Chancellor, Dr. Divina Grossman.

If you would like additional information about Envision the Future, or any of the CONNECT Partnership's other initiatives, please contact Stacey A. Kaminski, Ed.D, executive director CONNECT Partnership at 508-531-1437 or, via email to [stacey.kaminski@connectsemass.org](mailto:stacey.kaminski@connectsemass.org), or Katherine Honey, SE Mass STEM Network Coordinator, via email at [khoney@comcast.net](mailto:khoney@comcast.net).

About CONNECT: CONNECT is a partnership of the five public higher education institutions in Southeastern Massachusetts: Bridgewater State University, Bristol Community College, Cape Cod Community College, Massasoit Community College, and the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth. Established in 2003, CONNECT has two primary goals: to improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability of higher education; and to advance the economic, educational and cultural life of Southeastern Massachusetts. CONNECT realizes its mission by focusing on four major areas, with activities and initiatives that enhance academic programs and ease transfer of students among the institutions; foster economic development through the region; promote cultural programs and projects; and share expertise and resources. The executive officers of the CONNECT institutions act cooperatively to strengthen their institutional missions and to enrich the life of the region.

About the Southeastern Mass STEM Network: The SE Mass STEM Network is one of seven Regional STEM Networks in Massachusetts, funded through the STEM Pipeline Fund of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE). The STEM Pipeline Fund was established through economic stimulus legislation in 2003, and renewed annually since 2006. The DHE has focused the Pipeline Fund on three primary goals: 1) increasing the number of students who participate in programs that support STEM careers, 2) increasing the number of qualified STEM teachers, and 3) improving STEM educational offerings available in public and private schools. Regional STEM Networks have been established to plan and implement activities that address the Pipeline Fund's goals in the beset manner for their geographic area. The SE Mass STEM Network is administered by the CONNECT Partnership.