

GIRLS Speaker Series a Great Success

The Ocean Explorium welcomed a record number of participants to its recently concluded speaker series, Girls Interested in Real Life Science (GIRLS). Formerly offered under the name of Women in Science + Engineering (WiSE), the series is made possible through the generous support of the Women's Fund of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts.



Ocean Explorium Education Programs Coordinator Abbey Spargo said, "We are thrilled that the third year of this program was such a success, and are grateful to the Women's Fund for making it possible. We thank the incredible speakers who donated their time and all the students and teachers who attended the series. We hope that the talks sparked an interest in the young people who participated and look forward to building on this success with additional components to provide an extraordinary experience for the young women (and men) of the South Coast".

The Girls Interested in Real Life Science (GIRLS) series, aimed at promoting the STEM subjects of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to girls and young women, featured women drawn from professions wherein the STEM subjects play a major role. Speakers included Susan Peterson, a wetlands and waste water consultant; Ilana Feinerman, an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist; Gina Cerrito, Marine Science Educator for New England Aquarium; Faith Ball, Senior Engineering Manager with Lockheed Martin Sippican; and Rhonda Moniz, Diver Safety Officer/Underwater Cinematographer/ROV pilot.

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Women's Fund and New Bedford Public Schools, the Ocean Explorium and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) were able to host an after-school program in conjunction with the GIRLS series. The program was co-taught by Abbey Spargo and Erin Adams, an SMAST technician, with support from the University's Marine Fisheries Field Research Group. The program focused on teaching marine science through a STEM lens for ten young girls from Roosevelt Middle School. The girls also attended a day long "Women in Science" program at New England Aquarium. The GIRLS after school program was designed to encourage the young women to learn from the speakers and instructors about possible STEM careers and to know that any door can be opened to them if they work hard and follow their dreams.



An average of 40 students and 17 adults attended each week to hear inspiring stories of overcoming obstacles in pursuit of academic and professional goals. Students from a broad range of schools participated, including: New Bedford, Fairhaven, Bristol Agricultural, and Old Rochester Regional High Schools; Roosevelt, Global Learning Charter, Our Sisters' School, Dartmouth, and Westport Middle Schools; Betsey B Winslow, James B. Congdon, and St. James-St. John Elementary Schools, the Old Hammondtown and Center Schools of Mattapoisett, and the Henry T. Wing School of Sandwich. "The number of schools participating in the GIRLS speaker series illustrates an interest in complementing classroom learning with community-based resources" said Ms. Spargo.

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