

News Release

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Million Girls Moonshot Comes to Wisconsin! State's Afterschool Network Joins Nationwide Effort to Close the Gender Gap in STEM

Tech and philanthropic leaders launch collective impact initiative to work with afterschool programs in Wisconsin and nationwide to increase diversity and equity in science, technology, engineering and math

Green Bay, WI – Sept. 17, 2020 – The STEM Next Opportunity Fund today announced a multi-year grant to the Wisconsin Afterschool Network as part of the Million Girls Moonshot. The Intel Foundation and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation have joined STEM Next Opportunity Fund and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to launch the Million Girls Moonshot. The effort is designed to engage 1 million school-age girls in the United States in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning opportunities over the next five years. The organizations will provide grant funding and in-kind resources to Mott-funded afterschool networks in all 50 states to increase access to hands-on, immersive STEM learning experiences. The first year Wisconsin grant, just awarded, is for \$5,000.

The Wisconsin Afterschool Network plans to use the funds to help afterschool programs in the state provide STEM education, including updating and improving network Website resources with a focus on researching, developing and disseminating STEM tools for the afterschool field, as well as building and strengthening afterschool STEM partnerships on the local and state levels.

“The Million Girls Moonshot provides an extraordinary opportunity for afterschool programs in Wisconsin to make an enormous impact on the lives of all our youth, and particularly our girls,” said Wisconsin’s Network Public Policy Lead Stan Kocos. “The future economy of our state and our nation will rely heavily on the STEM fields, and afterschool programs are uniquely situated to help prepare our youth for those career opportunities. We’re deeply appreciative of the work of STEM Next, the Intel Foundation, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for their generous support, now and over the years.”

“The Million Girls Moonshot harnesses the spirit of innovation — in philanthropy and in afterschool programming — to reimagine our nation’s next generation of engineers, problem-solvers, builders and makers,” said Ridgway White, president and CEO of the Mott Foundation. “We’re delighted that the Intel and Moore Foundations will join us in an effort to promote gender equity by empowering girls through STEM learning opportunities.”

Just as the original moonshots of the 1960s and '70s united the nation behind a common goal and dramatically advanced scientific achievement, the Million Girls Moonshot aims to create a national movement to change the trajectory of women and girls in STEM. Led by STEM Next Opportunity Fund, the Million Girls Moonshot will tap a range of funding and programmatic partners, including NASA, Qualcomm, Technovation, STEMconnector, National Girls Collaborative Project, Jobs For The Future (JFF), Techbridge Girls and Lyda Hill Philanthropies.

“Every girl deserves access to high-quality education to achieve their dream career, regardless of their ZIP code or family’s socioeconomic status,” said Gabriela A. Gonzalez, deputy director, Intel Foundation. “The powerful synergies from collaborating with other organizations who share these values achieve a larger collective social impact to advance gender equity and parity in STEM fields, and more important, elevate girls’ future prospects for a better quality of life. Equipping youth with emerging technology skills in Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Computing, and Internet of Things is also critical for an inclusive and

diverse future workforce. By joining this movement, we are expanding, scaling and sustaining the spirit of Intel's She Will Connect signature initiative, which is something that no sole organization can do alone."

To support programs as they pivot to meet students' needs during the pandemic, the Million Girls Moonshot is providing the Wisconsin Afterschool Network and other state afterschool networks with technical assistance, educational resources, access to Intel's She Will Connect partners and mentorship from STEM experts including Intel employee volunteers.

Women make up half of the total U.S. college-educated workforce, but are vastly underrepresented in STEM fields, comprising just 16% of engineers, for example. Black and Latina women have even less representation, at approximately 2% each. With economic projections pointing to a [need for 1 million more STEM professionals](#) than the country will produce at its current rate over the next decade, engaging and keeping more girls in STEM pursuits will be critically important for solving our nation's most pressing challenges.

Over the past several decades, afterschool and other out-of-school-time programs have developed expertise in providing the kind of immersive, hands-on learning experiences that are critical to helping students gain fluency in STEM subjects. This school year, the opportunity is even greater as students and families face many more hours outside of the traditional classroom. From running STEM activities virtually and distributing STEM kits to students, to offering small group, in-person activities on remote school days and during traditional afterschool hours, afterschool programs have stepped up to keep students engaged and learning. The potential for impact is enormous: The nation's 100,000 afterschool programs serve more than 10 million young people.

The Million Girls Moonshot leverages more than \$300 million in investments made by the Mott Foundation in the past two decades to advance afterschool programs and systems, including the development of afterschool networks in all 50 states, as well as Mizzen by Mott, an app that provides afterschool educators free access to high-quality content. Through consistent, equity-focused STEM programming and mentorship that engages girls throughout their youth, the Million Girls Moonshot will help weave together opportunities, ensuring that girls are inspired and supported to continue pursuing STEM in high school and beyond.

Learn more at MillionGirlsMoonshot.org.

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About STEM Next Opportunity Fund

STEM Next Opportunity Fund is the legacy organization of the Robert D. Noyce Foundation and is dedicated to bringing high-quality STEM learning to millions of young people and closing the gender gap in STEM careers. As a national leader, strategic guide, policy advocate and investor, STEM Next is bringing about a transformative expansion of high-quality and inclusive STEM learning opportunities. By investing early in the lives of our children, we are transforming their lives and preparing them for the 21st century economy. Learn more at <https://stemnext.org/>.

About the Wisconsin Afterschool Network

Mission: The mission of the Wisconsin Afterschool Network (WAN) is to support schools and community partners in delivering high quality school-age afterschool programs to diverse children and youth to promote academic success, personal/social development and healthy active living.

Vision: All Wisconsin school-age children and youth have the opportunity to attend a high quality afterschool or expanded learning program.