



**For More Information:**

Kristin Chase Duffy  
207-774-5513  
kristin@mainewomensfund.org  
www.mainewomensfund.org

### **Grantmaking By and For Girls**

Portland – The Maine Women’s Fund partnered with the [Maine Girls’ Collaborative](#), an extension of the [National Girls’ Collaborative Project](#), which serves to create gender equity in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), to award \$5000 in social change grants to five girls programs promoting lasting social change in Maine.

“These five grants are unique because the decisions were made by high school girls about programs designed for girls,” said Elizabeth Stefanski, Executive Director, Maine Women’s Fund. “Normally, the grant proposals are reviewed by the public at large. Our experiment put the decision making purely in the hands of girls, who would benefit from the proposed activities.”

Organizations from across the state teamed up to design projects that would encourage girls to get involved in the STEM fields and submitted their proposals to the Maine Girls Collaborative Project. Then twenty high school girls, from York to Old Town, joined together on March 6 to determine how to allocate funds. Teamed with mentors from the [New Girls’](#) from Bowdoin College, the girls explored various methods of decision making—from criteria driven ranking to consensus building, discussed the ramifications of girls not participating in STEM, and reviewed the grant proposals. Ultimately, the girls decided to give away \$5000 to the following projects:

#### **Somerset County Adventure Girls**

[Hardy Girls Healthy Women](#) and [Community Health and Counseling Services](#) will host four sessions of Adventure Girls, a program for girls in grades 2 - 6. “*Adventure women,*” with careers in [STEM](#) fields, will lead girls on adventure activities. A female fire chief will demonstrate the chemical reactions and combustibles of fire. Girls will explore botany/science medicine and pharmaceuticals at a local herb farm. A female detective will help girls discover forensic science and how facts are gathered and crimes are solved. Girls will tour a large tomato farm and explore farm ecology where they will learn the positive impact agriculture has on the environment and communities.

#### **Powered by Girls: STEM and Leadership**

Each year, [Girls Unlimited](#) creates a space for girls in grades 4 - 8 to expand their horizons by participating in activities and workshops designed to encourage them to think critically about the world around them. This year, the conference will focus on ways that science and technology can be used to pursue fields of study and social action. The conference will offer 120 girls the opportunity to participate in five different workshops that are rooted in [STEM](#), including iMovie,

Photoshop, online social networking, conservation, marine biology and captive wildlife care and education. Conference participants will get hands-on experience using these technologies to engage in social action, develop coalitions among girls, and learn from college women who are pursuing the sciences in their careers.

### **Opening the Doors of Science to Girls**

[Coastal Studies School for Girls](#), the [Freeport Public Library](#), [Waynflete School](#), and a variety of Maine environmental and research organizations will partner to offer an exciting and informative lecture series designed to inspire and inform high school girls about global environmental issues and [STEM](#) opportunities in related fields. The series of six lectures over a four month period will feature oceanographers, wild life biologists, nature photographers, a marine archeologist and environmentalists. Participants will learn about global issues and how they can make a difference in their daily lives and career choices. The series is open to the public, allowing for cross-generational dialogue, engagement and involvement.

### **Students Exploring STEM**

This project was designed to dramatically improve the number of graduates who are better prepared to enter college, further the workforce, and contribute to our economy through [STEM](#) careers. This project begins with a group of students who meet monthly to learn about STEM careers and college courses. This group will attend a local [Expand Your Horizon](#) event at the University of Maine Orono. When they return, they will plan and oversee a two day STEM College/Career hands-on event for students in grades 6 - 9. The project will reach out to girls from economically disadvantaged communities, where the majority of these girls have the potential to be first generation college students.

### **Amazing Maine Women in STEM**

[Women Unlimited](#) and [Challenge Learning Center of Maine](#) (CLC) will create opportunities for girls to meet Maine women who are successful and thriving in [STEM](#) fields. The event will feature successful women discussing their jobs, what first interested them about STEM, and how they got into their given fields. They will offer their advice on how to succeed in STEM and provide opportunities for the participating girls to try out various activities related to each woman's field.

### **About the Maine Women's Fund**

In 20 years, the Maine Women's Fund has granted over \$1.5 million to organizations across the State. Last year, the Fund granted nearly \$80,000 to nonprofits which are creating long-lasting change that will build the economic security of thousands of women and girls. Through grantmaking, we are pushing for policy changes, investing in education and girls' independence. We are helping women build and expand businesses, train for better jobs and wages, build assets and make smart financial decisions. We are working with women as leaders and donors to prioritize women as key agents of change for their families, communities and Maine.

###