

Workshop: NGCP - Saturday 10:15 a.m. June 30, 2007  
At the AAUW National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona

NGCP ( National Girls' Collaborative Project) was formed when AAUW and the Puget Sound Science Center applied for a grant from the NSF (National Science Foundation.) This idea was based on the NNGCP (Northwest National Girls' Collaborative Project). NGCP is a 3-year project that will offer mini-grants, up to \$1,000 for each collaborative project to AAUW branches.

At this workshop, there were 8 women who shared their experiences and ideas. In addition to the five NGCP regional liaisons, the other speakers were Christi Corbett, formerly an aerospace engineer, and now a research associate with the AAUW's Educational Foundation, Karen Peterson, CEO, Puget Sound Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology, and Ann Willoughby, Manager of Community and External Relations, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

I was especially glad to meet Jennifer McDaniel, NGCP Regional Liaison, South Atlantic 2 Region since starting in January, 2008 Jennifer will replace Michelle Staben as our Regional Liaison for Virginia, North and South Carolina. Jennifer McDaniel should be able to help any branch in North Carolina in establishing their NGCP project. Jennifer is from Orlando, Florida and is a product of the Expanding Your Horizon (EYH) program, which began in California and is now done annually all over the country. In North Carolina, there is an EYH program in Raleigh held in March every year. I was fortunate to have been a volunteer for the EYH program in Raleigh for the first time in March, 2007 and was interested to learn how it worked with 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls in trying to have girls learn about careers in math and science.

Here are some of the reasons that STEM projects, like EYH and now NGCP have been formed:

1. Standardized tests were found to be biased in favor of boys.
2. In 2005, 58% of women had college degrees, but of those degrees only 38 were in the STEM fields.
3. In the workplace, only 17% of engineers are women.
4. Men are more self-assured; women are less self-assured.
5. Men have great role models for power and money
6. Women think their role models in the sciences are ugly women who wear horn-rimmed glasses.

Here are some of the things we can do to encourage girls to go into STEM:

1. Make girls informed on what careers they can do in STEM.
2. Encourage girls to take math and science in high school
3. Challenge the stereotypes by introducing good female role models in STEM to the girls.
4. For girls in middle school or high school, set up dinners with female professionals from different STEM fields who will rotate to a different table for each course. These professionals should be open to questions from the girls, so the girls can learn both what the women both like and don't like about their chosen fields.

Any AAUW branch should consider starting such a project. If you want to apply for a mini-grant from NGCP, it must be collaborative, such as coordinating with the girl scouts that can supply the girls or perhaps with a corporation that can supply a community room for the use of the project. Seek out women professional groups in your area with which you could collaborate; the younger women can be a good source of appropriate role models and would have up to date information on the jobs in STEM. Perhaps you can contact your local water district or perhaps a local union as sources for collaboration.

Our branch in Chapel Hill is considering such a project. We have one collaborative partner and plan to seek more partners. We will apply for a mini-grant from NGCP and perhaps from AAUW-NC. We are focusing on younger girls, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grades. Other programs (such as EYH ) seem to be focusing the middle school and high school. We feel that the younger the age that we start to encourage an interest in the sciences, the better chance we have of getting more women into and staying in the sciences.

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