



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Inspiring Young Women to Pursue "STEM" Careers

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Traditionally, men have dominated the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). However, over the last decade or so, women are not only getting involved, they are finding out just how successful they can be in each and every one of these fields.

That is why I encourage you to join me this month of March to celebrate “Expanding Girls’ Horizons in STEM Month”. This is a great opportunity to not only inspire girls to enter these fields, but also recognize the potential they have in them.

According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment opportunities in the STEM fields are expected to grow 13 percent by the year 2022. That is two percent faster than the expected growth rate for all other career fields.

To encourage young people to enter into STEM fields, educators have been improving K-12 science and mathematics education, providing STEM training to teachers and increasing the number of students pursuing STEM degrees.

Locally, I have been proud to support the expansion of STEM programs in our local schools. My recent efforts include securing funds that are helping districts purchase equipment that can be used for hands-on learning, like 3-D printers.

There are a number of ways you can encourage the young women in your life to think about future careers in STEM, including:

- Support and spread the word about quality organizations which offer scholarships and summer programs to get young women interested in STEM;
- Are you a woman in a STEM field? If so, think about pursuing opportunities to mentor young women who might be interested in following a similar career path;
- Share examples of women who have paved the way in the STEM field, including Marie Curie, the only woman in history to win two Nobel Prizes and Sally Ride, the first American woman to travel into space;
- Share the message that STEM professionals can have a major impact on society through their inventions and efforts.

Each and every day, technology is changing and that means endless possibilities for new and interesting careers for our region’s young people—and especially young

women. During Expanding Girls' Horizons in STEM Month , I hope you'll join me in efforts to encourage them to learn more about careers in these exciting—and important—careers.