WHAT IS EUREKA!?

Girls Inc. Eureka! is a STEM-based (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) approach to engaging and empowering 8th—12th grade girls to see themselves as future leaders, learners and creators of change.

IMPACT STORY

In January, the Eureka! Pilots (11th graders) were visited by Isha Camara, a local spoken word poet and college student pursuing a career in STEM. Isha spoke with the Pilots about her background growing up in South Minneapolis, her passion for poetry and self-expression and her career path as an endocrinology student at the University of Wisconsin. Isha shared a few of her own poems that spoke to the experience of being a young woman of color in Minneapolis, and the girls were riveted. The youth then had the opportunity to write their own poems using the framework of a “Just because…” poem, which encourages the writer to think about the stereotypes that others may have of them and to confront those stereotypes through poetry. At first, the girls were hesitant and tentative. One of the Pilots, *Grace, said, “It’s just so hard to be creative, I don’t even know what to write.” Youth counselors supported and encouraged them through their writing process, and with some more work time, Grace had a burst of creativity. When given the opportunity to share their poems, Grace was the first to stand up. She shared her first line: “Just because I’m short, doesn’t mean I can’t do it,” and her peers instantly snapped their fingers and encouraged Grace to keep reading. The Pilots were inspired by Isha and proud to share their own experiences through spoken word.

Hands-on, engaging opportunities that expose girls to positive adult role models in STEM are key to the Eureka! experience. While the majority of Eureka! programming is STEM-focused, we also believe strongly in providing participants with enriching, empowering experiences like this spoken word workshop that help girls: be themselves and resist gender stereotypes, have confidence in themselves, and express themselves with originality and enthusiasm. This multi-faceted, experiential programming is made possible through the generous support of individuals and organizations like the George Family Foundation.
KEEPING GIRLS IN STEM

Without intervention, girls' interest and confidence in STEM can begin to wane as early as elementary school. Between 4th and 8th grade, more girls than boys begin to turn away from science, technology, engineering and math, making it critical to engage girls in middle school before they begin making selections for the high school classes needed to pursue STEM careers.

For girls, building self-assurance of their abilities in STEM areas early in their education is key, as is ongoing reinforcement throughout high school. The Eureka! program is designed to both engage and support girls' interest in STEM, as well as give them the tools to graduate from high school ready for college and beyond!

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

| Displaying academic motivation and self-efficacy | Having self-confidence with respect to STEM | Being comfortable taking healthy risks | Making healthy choices about physical activity | Participating in leadership or volunteer activities |

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

High school graduation  Enrolling in post-secondary education  Working in STEM professions

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