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FOR RELEASE

MCWT Foundation Convenes IT CIOs and Grade School Girls to Advance Its Mission

- *IT executives deepen commitment to MCWT programming at CIO Breakfast*
- *Girls explore technology careers at “Girls are IT!” half-day event*

DETROIT, March 18, 2015 – The Michigan Council of Women in Technology Foundation takes a holistic approach at how to achieve its aspirational goal of making Michigan the No. 1 state for women in technology. Today is one such example as 130 seasoned IT leaders convened at the nonprofit’s annual CIO Breakfast to discuss their role in advancing and retaining female IT talent. Just a couple of hours later, 500 young girls participated in the hands-on “Girls are IT!” event building robots, learning about coding and hearing from successful female IT role models on careers in technology.

“We work to broadly reach young girls to get them to consider technology and deeply connect with women who choose the IT path,” said MCWT Executive Director Sarah Prout. “From Girls are IT! to the CIO Breakfast, we’re creating a steady stream of women ready to enter the technology workforce and supporting them throughout their professional life.”

At 7 a.m., a roomful of IT executives at Detroit’s Westin Book Cadillac networked before listening to Quicken Loans CIO Linglong He deliver a keynote address on five ingredients for leadership and the importance of building a culture of innovation. Quicken Loans is in its fifth year of partnering with MCWT.

MCWT President Cindy Warner then discussed specific ways companies can get involved in programming that inspires and grows women in IT.

“As Michigan’s technology sector continues to grow, diversity provides an edge that helps fuel a company’s competitiveness and success,” said Warner. “Our 64 partner companies see engagement with MCWT as one component to strengthen their business. They see the value of professional development, networking and volunteer opportunities for their staff.”

From 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., nearly 500 metro-Detroit girls from grades four through 12 explored the many facets of information technology at the second annual [Girls Are IT! event](#) at University of Michigan – Dearborn. Participants weaved in and out of 15 workshops, such as Ford Motor Co.’s session on detecting cyber threats, Microsoft’s 3D printing demonstration and Vector Form’s session on game development.

“I wanted to come to Girls are IT because it seems like a fun experience and I can learn from it for the future,” said Starkia Drake, student at Brace Lederle Elementary Technological Communications School.

The event is a collaboration among the MCWT Foundation, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Lawrence Technological University, and University of Detroit Mercy. The groups designed it to introduce girls to IT role models and let them explore the many IT-centric career options available.

“MCWT inspires and grows women in technology, and is working to ensure Michigan ultimately leads the nation for women in IT,” said MCWT Executive Director Sarah Prout. “Anyone interested in our mission is welcome to join us. We are looking forward to this time of great growth in not only the technology industry, but the women who will be a part of that workforce.”

MCWT's 700 members stay engaged through eLearning, professional development events, networking and mentoring programs. Partner funding, a small staff and more than 300 volunteers enable it to grow beyond Southeast Michigan and spread its impact. The organization brings together a network of stakeholders—teachers, parents, students, businesses, professionals and retirees— who are committed to seeing the state's IT community thrive.

Visit mcwt.org to learn more about MCWT Foundation's cause, its programs for women and girls interested in technology, and how to become a member or partner.

The Michigan Council of Women in Technology Foundation strives to inspire and grow women in technology fields, with an aspirational vision to make Michigan the No. 1 state for women in technology. The organization supports Michigan's female IT workforce, students, corporate partners, schools and the overall community with programming, scholarships, networking, learning, mentoring, and technology experiences. Find more information at www.mcwt.org and connect via [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and www.mcwtblog.org.

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