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# Expanding Your Horizons

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Community Engagement work comes in all forms. For Marcy Seavey and her Expanding Your Horizons (EYH) project, she sees community engagement work through the lens of middle school girls.



Expanding Your Horizons is a national program that engages secondary level girls in STEM mentoring experiences at the University of Northern Iowa through a partnership with the Society of Women Engineers (SWE). Activities for the day focus on small group, hands-on learning that allows the girls to explore a wide variety of future careers centered around science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

Marcey states, “Our purpose is to prepare our students for the world. This means that we must be a part of that world. Activities through Expanding Your Horizons, even though they are short in duration, create lasting memories and impact on our engaged students and future students.”

A key component of the work Marcy and others are doing is to put females at the forefront of STEM. It is important to Marcy to showcase the success women are finding in the STEM fields as well as to hear the stories of those women’s real successes and struggles. Marcey explains,

“Many of our EYH participants have never been on a college campus before this event. They have never been in a college classroom or laboratory and they might not ever have thought of themselves participating in college. After EYH, they can picture these spaces and themselves in these spaces.”

The program not only benefits the individuals involved in the program but the volunteers who put the event on as well. Marcy pulls together a wide range of community members to volunteer in a variety of activities, from working the registration desk to leading sessions. The volunteers

provide a real example of multiple generations coming together to exhibit the importance of STEM activities within the community.



think for all of us, this is an opportunity to give back to our community and to network with each other...It is a real example of multiple generations coming together, not because we are paid to, but because the participants and the STEM activities in our community are important to us all.”

Marcy and her volunteers are well aware of the importance of the community engagement work they are doing through their project. The EYH project helps to make the connection between community members and campus. Marcy sees the two entities as a community within a community, instead of separate. “Events like EYH help develop deeper partnerships with area business and nonprofits, which can lead to other partnerships. For example, SWE, John Deere, UNI STEM, and the Northeast Iowa STEM Hub co-sponsored local free viewings of the engineering documentary DREAM BIG two years ago because of our ongoing partnership for EYH.”

Through the EYH project, participants and volunteers have a unique opportunity to put women at the forefront of STEM fields. Opening a world the girls may not have known to be within reach for them. The passion behind the project is evident as Marcy explains how she gets people excited about her project and the work she does.

“I’m not sure how anyone can not be excited about 150 5th-8th grade girls getting to hang out for a day



with women scientists and engineers!” Marcy states.

The Office of Community Engagement is proud to support Marcy and her team of volunteers for their commitment to strong leadership and lasting engagement created through her project. The passion, engagement, and excitement provided by the EYH project will have lasting effects for years to come.

Although Marcy was unable to showcase her project at this year’s Community Engagement Celebration Day, she uploaded her work onto Rod Library’s UNI ScholarWorks to share with others. ScholarWorks allows individuals to remain connected through their collection of research and creative and scholarly output from the UNI community and allows individuals to be #BetterTogether. If you would like to upload your engagement work, visit: [scholarworks.uni.edu](https://scholarworks.uni.edu) and share how you are #EngagedUNI and help others learn #UNITogether.



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