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Woodson: Girl Scouts aiming to diversify STEAM field

Monica Woodson The Detroit News

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It's no secret the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) field has long been dominated by White men, who, according to the National Science Board, make up 70% of the workforce, leaving women and minorities underrepresented at every level.

We can no longer accept this status quo. It's time to change the face of this field, and Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan (GSSEM) is at the forefront of the mission in Metro Detroit.

While our famous and delicious cookies may be the first thing that comes to mind, the organization is about so much more. It's about mentoring the next generation of leaders and innovators, equipping girls with the skills and experiences they need to succeed in life and create meaningful change in their communities.

STEAM is an essential component of that mission.

Girl Scouts are provided with a unique "fun with purpose" K-12 curriculum to inspire us to embrace and celebrate scientific discovery — whether that means finding out how a car engine runs, learning to manage finances or caring for animals.

Young girls are learning how to participate in the world of technology, and how to shape it and make it theirs.

GSSEM, with help from General Motors, Comcast and the Vilcek Foundation, is working to launch a Mobile STEAM Lab. This innovative and community-centric mobile lab will serve school districts by supplementing curriculum and providing leading industry tools and resources.

Through the lab, we are looking to address education gaps for Metro Detroit students and are providing access to hands-on learning experiences outside the classroom, allowing youth to try something new and impactful.

These opportunities create a platform for young girls to challenge the current inequities within the STEAM field, addressing gender inequality and racial diversity issues.

Building a diverse and inclusive future in this field begins with giving young girls the tools they need to succeed.

So, this National STEAM Day, let's make a commitment to invest in a brighter future by providing all girls, including those without access to Girl Scouts, STEAM resources and programming.

Together, we can rewrite the narrative, change the statistics and ensure that this type of education is accessible to every young girl.

Monica Woodson is chief executive officer of Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan.

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