



For Immediate Release

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YOUNG WOMEN'S PREPARATORY NETWORK PROMOTES STEAM LEADERSHIP AMONG YOUNG WOMEN IN ANNUAL COMPETITION

It has long been a concern that young women leave the study of STEM earlier than young men. But Dallas-based Young Women's Preparatory Network (YWPN) is working not only to inspire a love of STEM learning in young women, but to craft the leaders of tomorrow in these important fields. For the seventh consecutive year, YWPN, a nonprofit whose mission is to support single-gender, college-preparatory, public education in Texas and beyond, will host its YWPN STEAM Challenge, culminating in a display and final judging at NorthPark Center in Dallas on Feb. 24 from 1 to 4 p.m.

Seventeen teams of girls will compete in middle-school and high-school divisions, with participants coming from Young Women's Preparatory Network schools from the following Texas school districts: Aldine, Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Lubbock, Midland, San Antonio and Ysleta. Teams are comprised of up to four students, and 64 students will be in Dallas for the final judging.

The student-led projects must solve a problem in the world that they believe will affect the next generation – and these girls have ambitious goals:

- One project from a seventh-grade team from Houston called Project Find Me hopes to save lives with heat-sensing drones that help first responders locate people during natural disasters.
- Another middle school team from Midland, known for its dry climate, is working on a portable water distillation system that can be delivered to oil-drilling sites to desalinate brine water, producing fresh water that could be used in homes and for agriculture.
- A team of high schoolers from Lubbock has developed an environmentally friendly cooling system to reduce the carbon footprint of large data centers.

The teams traveling to Dallas have won the individual competitions in their home schools and will present their work to a team of judges via Zoom from Feb. 13-16. Those presentations will be recorded and posted on youngwomensprep.org on Feb. 16, and at that time, the public may begin to cast their votes for the People's Choice Award. Votes cost \$1 and help benefit the STEAM Challenge.

On Feb. 22, the girls will come to Dallas, where they will check into their hotel and have dinner at Mattito's in Oak Lawn with event sponsors, which include NEC, The Perot Foundation, The Mary Pate Fund, and Playstudios. On Feb. 23, they'll be given a tour of HKS, a Dallas firm that considers its staff to be the architects and designers of our future. They'll also have time that day to put the finishing touches on their projects.

The following day, Feb. 24, is the official YWPN STEAM Challenge at NorthPark Center.

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We're so proud of the girls in our network of schools for creating innovative projects for our annual YWPN STEAM Challenge," said Lynn McBee, CEO of Young Women's Preparatory Network. "The STEAM Challenge takes a mountain of effort and costs our nonprofit nearly \$90,000 a year to provide our girls with this opportunity, so we are thankful to our sponsors who make this possible."

Young Women's Preparatory Network gives young women the academic and leadership skills to achieve success in college and life. Most YWPN students are girls of color who come from low-income households, where often they are the first in their families to graduate high school and attend college. One hundred percent of YWPN students graduate high school and are accepted into a college or university. Last year, the 412 members of the YWPN statewide Class of 2023 earned more than \$90 million in academic and merit-based scholarships to attend college.