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Calling All Future Women Technology Stars:

Advance IT Minnesota Announces First Annual “Minnesota Aspirations for Women in Computing” Award for High School Students

Seeking young women in high school aspiring to careers in technology and computing; nominations accepted Sept. 24 – Nov. 16, 2012

Minneapolis, MN (September 24, 2012) - Despite holding six in 10 American jobs, women held just 25 percent of computing occupations in 2011. And of the 1.4 million expected openings for computer specialists in 2020, the current number of American graduates can fill only 30 percent. To help bridge this gender and talent gap, and support, recognize and encourage young women in high school interested in computing and technology, Advance IT Minnesota announces it is hosting the first “Minnesota Aspirations for Women in Computing” award. Advance IT Minnesota is seeking young women in high school across the state with outstanding achievements and aspirations in technology to apply for the award online at www.aspirationsaward.org beginning September 24, 2012. Applications will be accepted through November 16, 2012.

"Our goal with this award is to inspire young women to become our next, best, Minnesota-grown technologists," said Russell Fraenkel, Director of Collaborative Programs and Outreach at Advance IT Minnesota, the high-tech incubator run by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System.

The Minnesota award honors young women in grades 9-12 for their computing-related achievements and interests. The National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) created the award in 2007 to encourage the computing aspirations of young women, introduce them to leadership opportunities in the field and generate visibility for women's participation in computing-related pursuits. This is the first year the award will be hosted in Minnesota, and young women will automatically be entered in the national level award if they apply by October 31.

“Encouraging the interest of young women in technology is critical: our workforce needs their creativity and innovation,” said Lucy Sanders, CEO and cofounder of NCWIT. “This award helps us recognize and encourage talent that might otherwise be overlooked.”



Awards will be made based on the interests, accomplishments, and community involvement of young women in computing and technology, as well as for their aspirations in computing and technology-related fields. Prizes for the Minnesota award include iPads, cash prizes, and mentorship/job shadowing opportunities at Minnesota technology firms. Students can submit applications for the award online at www.aspirationsaward.org from September 24 to November 16, 2012. Winners will be chosen in December and honored during events hosted by Minnesota technology firms in the spring of 2013.

All Minnesota award applicants also have the opportunity to concurrently submit their application for the national award. That application deadline is November 2. National award-winners will be honored at the 2013 Bank of America Technology Stars of the Future Showcase in Charlotte, North Carolina, and receive \$500 and a laptop computer.

Additional award program sponsors are being sought to support the collaborative efforts provided by the following partners: Black Data Processing Associates, Thomson Reuters, Unisys Corporation, Twin Cities Chapter of the Association of Women in Computing, Maverick Software Consulting, Symantec, Minnesota High Tech Association and Advance IT Minnesota. For more information, contact Russell.Fraenkel@metrostate.edu.

About Advance IT Minnesota

Advance IT Minnesota engages employers, educators, technology professionals and learners to develop a more robust IT workforce in Minnesota. A Center of Excellence within the Minnesota States Colleges and Universities system, it is housed at the Metropolitan State University, Minneapolis campus. For more information, visit www.advanceitmn.org.

About National Center for Women & Information Technology

The National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) is a coalition of over 200 prominent corporations, academic institutions, government agencies, and non-profits working to increase women's participation in information technology (IT). To find out more, visit www.ncwit.org.