



The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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Putting science to work for society

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Girls and Science Mentorship Program

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PRESS RELEASE: The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) launches a pilot program to engage and strengthen the interests of middle school girls in science, the *Girls and Science Mentorship Program*.

New Haven, Conn., December 10, 2009 – The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) announced the launching of a new, after-school outreach program titled *CAES Girls and Science Mentorship Program*. The goal of the pilot *Program* is to assist middle school girls with their science education by giving them the opportunity to work in active research laboratories with our professional scientists. Research has shown that it is critical to support science and math education for girls at this age, so that they do not begin to fall behind male students in math and science. Dr. Sharon M. Douglas, head of the mentorship program said, “We want to help prepare them for the future--science careers that require advanced degrees or other careers that utilize science but do not require advanced degrees, such as medical and technical assistants, horticulturalists, or environmental technicians.”

Participants were selected based on a competitive basis, which included recommendations from science teachers and student applications. In this mentorship program, selected students are paired with Ph.D.-level female research scientists working in professional science environments at the CAES. Each professional scientist will work with their selected student to design a project or experiment in the scientist’s area of expertise that involves inquiry-based and “hands-on” science in the professional scientific research center at the CAES.

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This 12-week program began with an *Information Meeting* for student participants and their parents, teachers, scientist mentors, and others on November 12, 2009 at the Experiment Station's New Haven campus. It provided an important opportunity for parents and students to meet CAES scientists and to discuss the program. Dr. Louis A. Magnarelli, Director of CAES, welcomed everyone to this event and highlighted the resources that the Experiment Station offers to the community and to the selected girls. Director Magnarelli emphasized the value of mentorship programs in science education and said, "It is important for scientific institutions to support science educational programs and help prepare students for future science careers."

The *CAES Girls and Science Mentorship Program* is supported by a grant to The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Research Foundation, Inc. from the Community Fund for Women & Girls, a component fund of The Community Foundation of Greater New Haven. The Community Fund for Women & Girls promotes social and economic advancement for women and girls through strategic philanthropy, grants, advocacy and collaboration.



Figure 1. Scientist mentors and student participants at the Information Meeting of The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Girls and Science Mentorship Program.



Figure 2. Mentors and students meet for a group activity exploring DNA for the first session of the *CAES Girls and Science Mentorship Program*.