

What is IGNITE?

IGNITE, an acronym for **I**nspiring **G**irls **N**ow **I**n **T**echnology **E**volution, is a network of girls and women who dream big dreams. The women work with technology in nearly every imaginable sector of the work world. The girls—typical high school students trying to figure out what to do with the rest of their lives—use familiar technology everyday (cell phones, video games, the Internet), but most have never considered careers that envision, develop, market, sell, apply, or rely on these and other technologies. When the women share their personal stories with the girls, sparks of curiosity, knowledge, hope, and possibility are ignited. The synergy generated by this interaction soon has the girls blazing paths to previously unimagined futures of their own.

Since the first Presentation in 2000, more than 10,000 high school girls have participated in IGNITE programs, meeting women working in technology careers and listening to their stories. After attending IGNITE presentations, girls not only know more about careers in technology, they are also inspired to investigate new possibilities for their own futures. In the Seattle School District where IGNITE began, girls once filled only one or two seats (if any at all) in high school technology classes. After six years of IGNITE, girls now claim an average of 40 to 50 percent of the seats in the Information Technology Programs in Seattle high schools. Some IGNITE girls have gone on to complete Cisco or Microsoft certifications, others have chosen college programs they would not have considered before IGNITE, and still others are now enjoying technology careers they had never thought possible.

IGNITE leaders take the time and make the effort to recruit women from widely diverse backgrounds. This ensures more connections—we want every girl to find one special person that she personally identifies with. When that happens, the magic begins. Not the magic of fairy tales and wishful fantasies, but the power that comes from knowing someone is there to guide, support, and encourage each girl as she forges ahead towards graduation and a meaningful career.