IGNITE®

Inspiring Girls Now In Technology Evolution

The IGNITE Toolkit

inspiring stories and everything you need
to know to start and manage a local chapter

Cathi Rodgveller, M.S. Ed.

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 20,000 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.

How to Use the IGNITE Toolkit

The purpose of this Toolkit is to help you catch the IGNITE spirit and start an IGNITE chapter in your school or community. Ideally, it will provide all the resources necessary to ensure success from the first Presentation on. Each section of the Toolkit contains information and step-by-step instructions in concise, readable "bytes." Copies of all resource documents (checklists, forms, letters, etc.) are included in the Appendix and the Resource section of the IGNITE website.

Just like the toolkit of a carpenter or programmer, the IGNITE Toolkit is full of useful tools—explanations and instructions, anecdotes, forms, and so forth. Unlike other toolkits, however, this book also offers inspiration—stories from women and girls (now young women) who have seen their lives changed through various IGNITE experiences. Stories that reflect new attitudes, new hope, and new or reaffirmed commitment. Between these covers, we offer not just hammers, nails, and a tape measure, but also a vision of the finished building and the blueprints for construction.

Because of the dual nature of the Toolkit, we hope you will first take time to read it all the way through to get a general feel for the way things are done as you absorb the spirit and enthusiasm of IGNITE. Once you've caught that excitement, then you're ready to delve into the details relevant to neighborhood networking, starting a chapter, or planning your first Presentation. Now the Toolkit becomes a resource—or, more accurately—a wealth of resources. As you look for specific information, please take special note of the text in blue boxes appearing on some pages. These are personal comments from Cathi Rodgveller, IGNITE founder, to emphasize points she feels are critically important.

The Toolkit consists of eight sections covering everything from underlying beliefs and principles to sample fundraising letters. General organization is shown in the section summaries below.

Section 1: The Rationale and History of IGNITE

Information regarding the technology gender gap and why it matters.

How IGNITE has evolved, and what makes it different.

The magic of IGNITE and why every community needs an IGNITE chapter.

Section 2: IGNITE is a Community Undertaking

Networking—how to identify and involve educators, corporate women, parents, and community volunteers who share the IGNITE vision and will actively support the program.

Throughout the Toolkit text you will see many references to IGNITE as a collaborative organization. Keep this in mind as you read and apply the information provided. We also want your ideas and suggestions, so please feel free to contact us via the website, ignite-us.org. IGNITE was born through collaboration and we know that is the only way that it will continue to grow.

Finally, at the very end of the Appendix you will find an evaluation form for the Toolkit itself. After you've planned and executed a year of events with the Toolkit, please take a few minutes to let us know how it's working for you. Your feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses in these materials is essential if we are to continue to make this the best resource possible.

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🔥 Section 1

Rationale & History

"Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and try to follow where they lead."

— Louisa May Alcott
Author

1.1

"Girls usually have an anti-social nerd image of IT people."

— Julia Fallon
Career Specialist
State Dept. of Education
Olympia, Washington

Facing Facts

July 2000: "The latest research paints a grim picture for women in technology."[1]

Nov 2004: "In this age of increased gender equality . . . the stats for women in IT are surprisingly poor."[2]

April 2006: "The Sydney Morning Herald reports that GOOGLE Australia can't find any women engineers."[3]

🔥 Why Such a Grim Picture?

No one questions the fact that women are seriously underrepresented both in technology education and training programs and in technology and engineering careers. What educators, women's advocates, think tanks, and untold numbers of researchers have tried for years to discover is *why* more women aren't choosing careers in technology. A report published by the Computing Research Association (CRA) suggests[4]:

- Lack of technology resources or ineffective use of the resources available.

- Association of computers with violent games, which appeal to boys but bore girls with their repetitiveness.

- Perception of computing as a solitary lifestyle that discourages socialization and is not conducive to family life.

- Lack of K–12 teachers and counselors knowledgeable of the full range of IT opportunities.

- Perception of IT work as competitive rather than collaborative.

- Differences in self-perceptions of ability between men and women, which may discourage women from pursuing studies in technology.

- Lack of female role models.

Similar reasons appear in other research, including a more recent revelation that "girls seem to be increasingly influenced by America's celebrity-obsessed culture. Now 32 percent say they want to be an actress, while 24 percent want to be a musician."[5]

While we realize that these aspirations are mostly unrealistic, girls are not likely to embrace technology while they dream of becoming the next young female superstar.

🔥 Changing Course: The IGNITE Vision

It only takes a few minutes of online browsing to realize how many educational and professional organizations are concerned about the lack of women in technology, or to discover how many professional networks already exist to encourage and support women in this field. More and more, organizers are understanding the importance of getting girls interested, even passionate, about technology early on—before either the stereotyped misconceptions or the "young superstar" dream have eclipsed rational thought.

Getting teenage girls interested and passionate about technology is exactly what IGNITE is all about.

In reviewing the eight factors cited by the CRA as influencing a woman's decision not to pursue technology, six are directly addressed by IGNITE. IGNITE provides girls with new perspectives of technology, including firsthand observations and hands-on experience with creativity and collaboration in the workplace. IGNITE also broadens educators' understanding of the range of technology opportunities available today. And IGNITE introduces girls to role models who reflect their individual backgrounds and struggles. Many Presentation speakers become mentors, often establishing relationships that continue into a girl's professional career.

So, while 20th century technology may have relied on stereotypical techies (nerdy programmers huddled in a cubicle writing code), technology today has been infused into nearly every aspect of daily work and recreation. Wherever a girl's interest may lie—math, medicine, the arts, social service, graphic design, or engineering—a solid battery of technology skills will give her an advantage in the workplace. When teenage girls are given the opportunity to develop personal relationships with technology and engineering role models, these girls gain the interest, passion, and determination to embrace 21st century technology in whatever careers they choose.

Notes

[1] Carrie Johnson, "'Old Girl's Network' Helps Bring Young Women into Technology Jobs," <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A1474-2000Jul29.html>, accessed on November 10, 2006.

[2] Drew Robb, "Fewer Women Joining the IT Ranks,"<http://itmanagement.earthweb.com/career/print/php/3435251>, accessed on November 10, 2006.

[3] Joyce Carpenter, "Women in Technology: This Week's Musings," <http://www.computerworld .com/blogs/node/2322>, accessed on November 10, 2006.

[4] Computing Research Association, "The Supply of Information Technology Workers in the U.S.," <http://www.cra.org/reports/wits/chapter_7.html>, accessed on November 10, 2006.

[5] Robb.

"*IGNITE makes girls feel special because they know it is just for them. You don't have to be tech-savvy or know anything about technology. Go to just one meeting and you'll be hooked.*"

— Grace Xie
Student
University of Washington

Igniting Change

🔥 Cathi Rodgveller, M.S. Ed.

Cathi Rodgveller

"The principles of IGNITE have evolved from my own experiences as an educator. Deborah Meier, now recognized as one of the leaders in educational reform, was one of my mentors. From her, I learned that to be a great educator you need to inspire children by helping them find their passions and learn through those passions."

Founder of IGNITE
Equity Coordinator - Seattle School District (Seattle, WA)

When I was little, I loved being a kid and being around kids. My mother told me, "Oh you love kids. You should work with them." So that's what I did and that's what I've been doing for the last thirty years.

I attended Queens College in New York, a part of City University of New York. It was a fascinating place where the professors had interesting and diverse backgrounds. One professor, for instance, marched during the civil rights movement and another had to flee Russia for religious reasons. There are many others I could mention, but those stories are for another book.

What was one of the most profound moments for me at the school was finding the Open Education Program. Through that incredible program I became inspired to be an educator. I worked with the students and staff at Central Park East Elementary School in East Harlem. The principal there, Deborah Meier, who is now recognized as one of the leaders in educational reform, was my mentor. From her, I learned that to be a great educator you need to inspire children by helping them find their passions and learn through those passions. At the school, each student had an individual learning contract. The teachers facilitated learning by connecting it to the students' personal interests. If Sally liked music, the teacher helped her learn science, math, and reading through the study of the piano and other instruments. In these somewhat chaotic classrooms, students were active and talkative, yet they were learning far more than if they had been sitting quietly at their desks. Instead of simply learning information, they were learning how to learn. That experience changed my whole perception of how and why people learn.

In those classrooms, I learned that success breeds success. That concept steers me and my outlook on teaching and learning, every day.

Another mentor at the College of Education, Richard McClure, taught me about compassion. He showed me how to respect each student by what he did. He wanted everyone to know they were important. If a student came in late to his class, he would take a moment to greet them and then para-phrase what he had already covered. He didn't care how many times he had to repeat himself. To him, it was the student and that student's learning that mattered. I still use his techniques today.

Besides the professors, the subject matter and the way it was taught also affected how and what I learned. For example, I gained great respect for John Dewey, who taught the need for relevance in education and brought kids into the community to learn about careers. Dewey did this back in the late 1800s through the early 1900s and I used his concept as a model throughout my own career, even arranging internships for middle school kids.

I graduated from Queens College with a Bachelor of Arts in Education and a Teacher Certification in Elementary Education. After graduation, I became a seventh grade English and social studies teach-er and then went on to earn a Masters of Science in Education and a School Counselor Certificate from St. Rose College in Albany, New York. During this time, I also earned a Teacher Certification in English (7 though 12).

Mirroring what I had done in the School of Education, I continued to work in schools with progres-sive environments. This led to a school counselor job at a middle school in upstate New York, and the creation of a program for at-risk students that was so successful it was featured in a 1990 PBS documentary called Turning Points. I also began counseling girls who had been sexually abused and, through that experience, created peer-based counseling programs, training middle school girls to become peer counselors and addressing the issues of body image, sexual harassment in school, and sexual abuse. These girls went onto thrive and make differences in other people's lives when the outcome could have been drastically different.

Moving west to Seattle, I began working for the Seattle School District as a recruiter for nontraditional careers for both boys and girls. Early on in that capacity, I was challenged to replicate my success in the construction trades by finding a way to boost the enrollment of girls in technology classes. Never one to back down from a challenge, and seeing the deep need for a program to interest girls in tech-nology and engineering, I developed IGNITE. The success of the program has enabled more than 10,000 girls to learn about careers and life possibilities that they had never dreamed possible.

If I can inspire someone—adult or child—to be their best, then I have done my job.

🔥 Fall 1999—The IGNITE Story Begins

I was working for the Seattle School District in a position funded by the Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act. The Perkins Act provides funding to school districts nationwide to promote, among other things, equal access to career and technical education for underrepresented populations. I was using this money to recruit female and minority students for a pre-apprenticeship program in the construction trades.

In the year and a half that I had been working in Seattle, I discovered that by inviting girls to informational programs where they met women working in the trades, they were more likely to show interest in the trade-related programs offered by the school district. Over that short period of time, this simple concept increased female enrollment in nontraditional classes from almost zero to an average of fifty percent.

🔥 A Challenge is Met

My success caught the attention of Patsy Ethridge-Neal, the head of Business and Marketing for the Seattle School District. Patsy wanted the same kind of results for technology programs, and challenged me to spark the girls' interest in the business and tech classes offered at the various district high schools. To get me started, she provided the phone number of someone she had met at Cisco Systems.

I have to admit, I was a little concerned. I didn't know that much about technology. I did, however, have eighteen years of success as an educator and the proven ability to create programs that inspired middle and high school students.

I felt the challenge was worthwhile—so I picked up the phone and called.

After explaining who I was and what I was trying to do, I was connected to a Cisco employee who excitedly told me he knew "someone who'll be interested in this" and gave me Maureen "Mo" O'Brien (now Rozenhart)'s number. Mo, a network engineer, responded with sincere enthusiasm when I invited her to tell a group of high school girls the story of how she found her career with Cisco. She even invited another female colleague to join her.

For the first two class Presentations, the teacher suggested that both girls and boys attend. Even though my past experience had taught me this wouldn't work, he insisted and I relented. I was still learning how my past methods would work in technology and thought maybe it would be okay.

It wasn't.

When the boys were around, the girls were reluctant to participate. As with any peer-related situation, they were concerned about how they looked and sounded. So, for the last four classes that day, we separated the girls from the boys and the dynamic changed completely. Now the girls were involved and excited. The women found it easier to connect with the girls-only audience, and it was evident that women telling their stories created magic that turned on light bulbs for these girls. The experience also gave the women a chance to step back and realize what they had accomplished in their career field.

At the end of that first day, I turned to Mo and said simply, "Well, that worked."

Mo nodded. "Yes, and I know more people to invite for the next one."

We looked at each other and chorused, "Then let's do this again . . ."

🔥 Replication and Expansion

As a result of that brief exchange, three more Presentations followed in quick succession at other Seattle high schools, each using the same girls-only formula. More of Mo's friends were volunteering to tell their stories, so I began networking with teachers and career center specialists at other Seattle high schools to see how many would be interested in hosting similar Presentations. Meanwhile, the girls were telling their friends about this new, fun way to learn about careers in technology.

The core group of volunteers kept in touch via a list-serve, which was pivotal in creating a sense of community. We could electronically brainstorm and keep the ideas flowing even when distance and time prevented us from meeting in person. Teachers, district administrators, career specialists, and women from corporations—everyone involved with the program—communicated, collaborated (and occasionally commiserated) on that list-serve, which still exists today.

After a year and a half of Presentations, the buzz for girls in technology classes started to grow, and I realized that we might be on to something. Wanting to secure more funding, I went to Olympia and met with Harriet Van Deursen in the Vocational Equity Department of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (simply called the Department of Education in other states). After I told Harriet what had happened during our initial Presentations, she immediately invited me to speak at an upcoming statewide vocational equity conference highlighting the best programs in the state.

🔥 A Name at Last!

After that meeting, the original presenters, along with a few friends who had heard about the fun, joined me at Mo's house to celebrate our success and create a name for the Presentation concept. We took out a large piece of paper and started throwing around ideas. I can't remember all of them, but Mo's "Chicks In Tech" sticks in my mind because it caused more than a few chuckles. We bantered possibilities back and forth until everyone agreed that we wanted to include the words "inspiring" and "girls" in a fun acronym that was easy to remember. Someone suggested having a name that embodied the spark of inspiration seen on the girls' faces during the Presentations. Spark . . . Fire . . . Flame . . . IGNITE. That was it! IGNITE included everything we wanted and more. It had "inspiring," it had "girls," and it stated what we were trying to do: Inspire Girls Now In Technology Evolution.

In that atmosphere of celebration, IGNITE was born. Led by Virginia Howlett, one of the world's first user interface designers, a volunteer group of women took the name and created a website we had talked about on the list-serve—a site where girls could learn about web design and we could post reports on the various Presentations. The site, which is the Seattle chapter's home page, can be found at www.ignite-us.org.

🔥 Spare Change and Exponential Growth

During that same summer gathering, Justine Vick, a network engineer at Microsoft, had asked, "Why don't you come and have field trips at Microsoft?" I looked at her in surprise and amazement while my mind raced to absorb both the implications and possibilities. I mean, what could make a stronger impression on the girls than visiting one of the largest technology corporations in the world?

That fall, Justine convinced her colleagues to use their office fund to pay for tours and lunches for the girls at Microsoft. Soon after that, senior management at Microsoft put their support behind IGNITE. In addition to the field trips, six in-school Presentations that year kept the buzz growing as girls signed up for technology classes in more Seattle high schools.

Patsy was thrilled because I had more than met her challenge.

Then things just started to snowball. I was invited to speak at Microsoft events, at meetings like the University of Washington's Women in Science and Engineering Conference, and with other individuals around the state who were involved with nontraditional education. Everyone wanted more of what IGNITE had to offer. Always working from a collaborative model, I also continued the process of meeting with teachers, administrators, career center staff, and technology professionals. I networked

with anyone and everyone in the Seattle area who might have an investment in helping girls become interested and involved in technology careers.

One idea that bore great fruit in that third year was a two-day conference at Microsoft. In March of 2002, one hundred girls from Seattle high schools had the opportunity to spend two days on the Microsoft campus in Redmond, Washington. On day one, girls attended workshops planned and put on by Microsoft employees. The second day, 100 girls paired with 100 Microsoft employees for job shadow experiences. Everyone involved enjoyed an amazing two days of collaborative learning.

As I continue to reach out to and help high school career centers and interested teachers from tech-ed, business, and marketing programs, IGNITE continues to expand. It now provides events for girls in all fourteen high schools in the Seattle School District. But IGNITE isn't just for Seattle, anymore. Industry women living outside the Seattle School District boundaries wanted IGNITE in their communities too, so I helped them start chapters in Pierce County and in other school districts in Washington. Then, through networking with other professionals at conferences, women in Idaho, Oregon, California, and Arizona have started IGNITE programs in their states as well.

🔥 IGNITE Won *What* Award?

In December 2006, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) contacted me. Julia Fallon, IT Education and Technology Integration Program Manager for the OSPI, felt that IGNITE was a natural for a national honor they had heard about. After reading through the award's application and criteria, I agreed and decided to apply.

The award is the *Programs & Practices that Work: Preparing Students for Nontraditional Careers Award*, sponsored by the National Association of State Director of Career & Technical Education Consortium, Association of Career and Technical Education, National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity, and National Women's Law Center.

Presented each spring, this award is the result of a search to identify local or state educational agencies across the country that have implemented effective programs and practices for improving access and success of students pursuing careers nontraditional for their gender. Information on the award-winning programs and practices is then made available to school districts looking for proven ideas to use in developing their own successful programs.

To be eligible, the local or state educational agency submitting the program or practice must show increased enrollment and / or increased completion of students of the underrepresented gender in

nontraditional CTE programs. Each program is then judged on quality, impact, documentation, and ease of replication. The newly published IGNITE Toolkit offered powerful evidence of quality and impact, and its very existence showed a means of replication. Six years of technology enrollment figures from three Seattle high schools documented our success in the classroom.

I submitted the application in the middle of January and, on March 22, received an email that said, "We are happy to recognize the Seattle Public Schools for the IGNITE program – [your] application definitely stood out . . ." We had won the award.

National recognition as a top tier "program that works" has led to countless opportunities. My summer plans now include speaking at meetings and events dealing with gender equity in Washington state as well as a trip to Washington, D.C., to address Congress near the anniversary of Title IX[1].   A lot of exciting things are in the works for the IGNITE program as well.

🔥 Looking to the Future

I know that I've talked a lot about high schools and made little, or no, mention of middle schools. Middle schools, in some respect, are more important than high schools because we catch the girls earlier before all the pressure from peers and society has set in. The model that is in this book works for young women at any level. Female middle school, high school, and college students everywhere will benefit in life changing ways by hearing women's stories who have forged the path ahead.

Helping people set up chapters in their community is the reason for this Toolkit. It contains the information, instructions, and sample documents for interested women to start local chapters and begin inspiring girls in their community. When you register your local chapter, you and your girls will be connected to a network of peers and role models across the country and, eventually, the world. Women and girls who share ideas, hopes, and dreams, and who are eager to learn and to help each other succeed.

If you have questions, or feel you need a little encouragement or support, just go to our website, www. ignite-us.org. My help is only a click away.

Cathi Rodgveller, M.S. Ed.
Seattle, Washington
January 2012

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[1] "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, except under certain and specific circumstances . . ." - Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972 (Title 20 U.S.C. Sections 1681-1688) – U.S. Department of Labor - http://www.dol.gov/oasam/regs/statutes/titleix.htm - Accessed May 30, 2007.

1.3

"When the girls meet professional women who look and sound like them, a light bulb turns on. They say, 'I can do what she has done.' This powerful realization can have far-reaching impact."

— Karen Peterson
CEO
Puget Sound Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology

Making Magic

Personal Presentations are the heart and soul of IGNITE. These Presentations are essentially storytelling. Women in engineering and technology tell middle and high school girls the stories of their personal journeys to their careers. Whenever possible, the women invited to speak mirror the demographics of students in the audience.

🔥 Demystifying Technology

> **Cathi's Comments**
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> *Women are underrepresented in technology and engineering careers. Women of color are extremely underrepresented. I want to stress the importance of showing diversity in the panel of women. It takes time and effort to find women who represent many races and ethnicities, but the impact justifies the undertaking many times over. Of course, ALL women on the panel are important, but the impact on the audience of a woman of color is profound.*

Presentations allow girls to understand that many jobs not commonly considered "high tech" often require technological competence. Careers in graphic arts and sales, small business ownership, and any number of creative endeavors require savvy computer or computer-related skills. The girls learn that technology is for everyone! They see that technical jobs are not for nerds or geeks, but for cool women who ride motorcycles, drive fast cars, wear awesome clothes, have children, make jewelry, and represent a broad spectrum of ethnicities, talents, and interests. These women are real people with real lives who happen to work with computers or other technology.

While each woman's story is unique, they all share the common theme of overcoming adversity, prejudice, or fear of "locked doors" to pursue jobs not traditionally held by women. Since women still hold less than 25 percent of engineering and technology jobs, hearing their success stories helps girls demystify the term "high-tech career," and meeting the women puts a female face on success. Lori Longthorne, program manager at Microsoft, puts it this way: "It took a lot of effort to break down the barriers and open the doors, but now we need young women to walk through these doors. We want them to join us."

When girls hear the women's stories, they realize they are hearing their own stories, too. These women offer hope because they have found a way around the obstacles, struggles, and confusion that many of the girls listening are experiencing. Storytelling has a powerful impact, not just on the girls, but also on the women who speak. As the women relate their journeys, they often gain new understanding of their own lives. Some realize for the first time just how far they have come since their own high school days, and this increased awareness unconsciously draws them closer to the girls.

Teachers also benefit. As they meet the speakers and collaborate with them to prepare Presentations or other events, teachers learn about the newest trends in business, marketing, and technology, which enables them to better equip students with 21st century skills. This interaction strengthens the school curriculum as it prepares competent workers for jobs in their own community. Even more important are the increased connections between students and teachers as both become more engaged in real-world learning.

Connections—The Magic Begins

Grace Xie, University of Washington student and active IGNITE participant, believes IGNITE makes girls feel special because "they know the program is just for them." Using local professional women as role models and mentors, IGNITE connects middle and high school girls to women who have already found success in engineering and technology-related careers. As the women tell their stories, the girls see and hear themselves and dream of becoming successful just like these women. But IGNITE helps girls do more than dream. It connects them to women who will answer their questions about how to prepare for the real world, guiding their choices of high school and college programs, encouraging them to attend college, offering hands-on experience through job shadowing and internships, and mentoring them through the years of career preparation. Finally, IGNITE helps network high school graduates and young college women with women in industry, connecting them as adults to the women whose stories they listened to as teenagers.

After six years of committed action, IGNITE has proven its effectiveness. Unmotivated middle and high school girls have turned into girls who go on to college and certification programs and become successful technology professionals. IGNITE graduates are now networking with other professional women, and—as a way to say thank you—returning to IGNITE to mentor younger girls.

> **Cathi's Comments**
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> *IGNITE creates magic. When the women tell their stories, you can see light bulbs start to go on. As they listen, the girls begin to change their perception of what they can accomplish right before your eyes. They see women who look like them. They hear the obstacles these women faced when they were in high school and relate them to their own experiences.*
>
> *IGNITE encourages girls to pursue their dreams and be inspired to achieve. The "I" in IGNITE is critical. We want to inspire girls to think bigger and expand their visions regarding what is possible for them personally. The women speakers stretch the boundaries of each girl's world in positive ways and provide hope for her future.*

🔥 Stories of Success

Throughout this Toolkit, quotes and stories from girls and women who have participated in IGNITE offer insight into what the program has meant to them. Since IGNITE was introduced in Seattle high schools, enrollment in technology classes has blossomed. Students, teachers, administrators, and corporate professionals have all been excited by IGNITE and remain dedicated to its continued success. Simply said, IGNITE works. IGNITE's success becomes a girl's success and ultimately the community's success. Please take time to read the stories of the women, the girls, and outside observers to see how IGNITE inspires all who are involved.

🔥 Why Your Community Needs IGNITE

IGNITE chapters gather the resources necessary to offer Presentation events to teenage girls in their own communities. As chapters evolve, they incorporate job shadows, conferences, workshops, and other activities that interest girls in engineering and technology careers. These events also ignite sparks of confidence and hope that carry the girls forward.

The global community of tomorrow's generation will offer few jobs that do not require the ability to manage technology and to provide the necessary background for those jobs, some sort of degree or certification is required. According to a report compiled by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), from 1979-1980 to 2003-2004, the number of woman obtaining bachelor's degrees has risen from 455,800 to 804,100. For the most part, these numbers are very encouraging, except in the terms of computer and information sciences. In 1979-1980, only 0.75 percent of all degrees received by women went to computer information and science majors. In 2003-2004, that number increased to a mere 1.85 percent.[1] Undergraduate degrees in engineering and engineering technologies received by women, during this same time frame, has increased from 1.43 percent to 1.83 percent.

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1 http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2006/section3/table.asp?tableID=490 - U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Table 30-1. Number of bachelor's degrees earned by women, by field of study: Various years, 1979–80 through 2003–04, accessed on November 3, 2006.

These startling numbers reveal the catastrophic situation that we find ourselves in concerning girls and their understanding of technology and engineering. Girls are more than capable of doing these jobs and obtaining the necessary degrees or certifications. Many love math and science and are computer savvy. But girls often associate engineering and technology-related jobs with work done in isolation or with stereotypes of antisocial nerds.

IGNITE helps break down these myths, which are far from reality, by giving girls opportunities to associate with real women who have real jobs that are interesting, fun, and pay well. As an added benefit, IGNITE provides a meaningful bridge between school and industry. Teachers learn about changing technologies, so their lessons reflect the world the students will face. Company representatives ignite fires within intelligent, capable girls who may one day return with certifications or degrees in hand, seeking a job.

🔥 Section 2

A Community Campfire

"Many persons have a wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratification but through fidelity to a worthy purpose."

— Helen Keller
Visionary

2.1

"IGNITE inspires. The successes of the original IGNITE girls bring tears to my eyes. I can't even begin to enumerate all the positive outcomes. The program has enriched the lives of everyone who has been involved."

— Harriet Van Duersen
Equity Coordinator (Ret.)
State Dept. of Education
Olympia, Washington

Elements of Fire

Traditional science teaches that fire requires three elements: fuel, heat, and oxygen—the "fire tri-angle." A more contemporary explanation adds a fourth component, the chemical reaction, and represents the elements graphically as a tetrahedron (a 3-D triangle, or triangle-based pyramid). This four-element explanation also represents the key components of IGNITE. At its best, IGNITE actively engages educators, parents, and corporate women.[1] The fourth component, the chemical reaction (the magic), occurs when these three support groups interface with the girls through Presentations and other IGNITE events. Just as a campfire suddenly blazes upward from a handful of tinder, the undiscovered hopes and dreams of these girls surge to the forefront of their lives, offering direction, purpose, and clear visions of success.

Returning to the basic elements of fire, it is significant to note that no single element is more important than another. If any element is missing, there simply is no flame. So it is with the components of IG-NITE. The primary roles of educator, parent, and corporate participants sometimes overlap, but generally are perceived as initiator/manager, cheerleader/volunteer, and motivator/mentor, respectively. An organized chapter with lots of volunteers can't succeed without corporate women to motivate and mentor. Volunteers and corporate mentors will find it hard to reach the girls without collaboration with someone inside the school system. And without volunteers, chapter organizers and corporate women will become frustrated, exhausted, and discouraged as they continue to manage the myriad details of preparation by themselves.

The girls, of course, are the catalyst, the chemical reaction that produces fire (or magic) when combined with the other three elements. Light a match six feet from a stack of dry kindling and nothing happens. Drop that match in the kindling and a flame will quickly rise. Oxygen + fuel + heat = combustion. Bring girls to hear inspiring women at organized events prepared by enthusiastic volunteers and you get personal connections that foster dreams and light pathways to future success. You get magic.

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[1] The term "corporate women" refers to all women, regardless of their employer, whose work requires some degree of technical knowledge or skill. The term may be imperfect, but it does describe the majority of Presentation speakers and is grammatically expedient.

2.2

"My high school was so small that we didn't have computer classes."

— Lani Bonadea

"I wondered how to combine my love of computers with my passion for helping people."

— Kelly Elston

"As a freshman, I felt isolated. I saw very few students who had my Latin heritage. I felt both invisible and conspicuous."

— Martha Flores

"I love technology. It helps me with so many things that other people take for granted. I prefer text messaging to phone conversations. You see, I am deaf."

— Christie Ong

The Girls

Teenage girls and their struggles for identity and direction are the reason IGNITE exists. Their futures—full of purpose, accomplishment, and a desire to "give back"—are the success stories of IGNITE. IGNITE is all about the girls.

🔥 Why Only Girls?

Girls are underrepresented in engineering and technology careers. This is a simple fact and a serious education issue. IGNITE's success comes from its strategic focus on girls, introducing them to women of similar backgrounds and ethnicities who now have successful engineering and technology careers. IGNITE chapters may experience pressure (and even some antagonism) from those who want to include boys, but it is important to address the fact that men currently hold a large majority of all engineering and technology-related jobs. IGNITE needs to maintain its focus on girls. Women presenters put a female face on jobs girls believe or assume are open only to men, proving that girls can, and should, also aspire to fun jobs in technology-based careers. Women demystify technology for girls.

Cathi's Comments

IGNITE seeks to remove barriers. With proper planning, all students with special needs can and should be accommodated at IGNITE events. Maintain a list of interpreters, aides, and specialists who can help. Reach out to students with special needs and work closely with experts to ensure these girls have an opportunity to participate fully in IGNITE.

Girls need information, support, and encouragement to envision themselves in engineering and technology careers. From a developmental standpoint, teenage girls need a safe space to explore new ideas, away from the potential criticism or dominance of boys. As educators, we have all witnessed the same mixed-group scenario—boys tend to dominate the event, asking questions that keep girls silent. While the boys' dominance is not necessarily intentional, most girls still remain silent for fear of demonstrating any interest different from what they perceive to be the norm of their peers. Without boys present, girls can more openly explore new and different possibilities in the IGNITE setting.

While IGNITE would never refuse a determined young man's presence at an event, it will continue to maintain its focus on girls, creating opportunities that specifically target their needs and interests.

🔥 Who Are These Girls?

These girls are "every girl." All shapes and sizes, all ethnicities and socio-economic strata, all teenage angst and confusion, all hopes and dreams, and all beautiful. Many of their stories are included elsewhere in this book, but here are a few brief introductions:

Candy Chiang: "In high school, I felt different from other girls because of my interest in technology. There was only one other girl in my Cisco class. It was weird and uncomfortable because I got called tomboy."

Catherine Hall: "My dad is an engineer and I've always been interested in what he does. As a freshman, I struggled to find classes that suited me and felt like I was being pushed toward classes in marketing and business. Sure, I didn't know exactly what I wanted for a career, but I knew it involved computers, technology, or engineering—and marketing wasn't going to cut it."

Lani Bonadea: "Since I had to work my way through school, I took a break and traveled to clear my mind and consider my options. Now I'm back studying physics and really excited about it. I'm not sure what I'll do with it yet, but I know it will be something I'm passionate about."

Vicky Ho: "I arrived in the United States from Vietnam at the age of ten, unable to speak English. Adjusting to the culture shock, I spent my first years in this country in ESL classes, trying to catch up with my peers. By high school, I excelled in English and my interest in technology was apparent to everyone."

Alice Yeh: "My advice is to pursue your passion, wherever it lies. Don't let other people's accomplishments intimidate you, because you are the architect of your dream."

Mo Rozenhart, the first corporate IGNITE enthusiast, says simply, "These girls are awesome."

"When I learned about IGNITE at Microsoft, I volunteered to help with some events. It was during these events that I learned, first hand, about the power IGNITE has to inspire girls about technology. I wanted to provide the same kind of inspiration for my daughter when she attended the high school in our community."

— *Raelene Sanders*
Pierce County Chapter Coordinator - IGNITE
Network Engineer - Microsoft

Parents

Parents can become wonderful IGNITE allies. Some will become part of the chapter's leadership team, others may share professional connections to help recruit Presentation speakers, and still others will help as needed with promotion, food, event planning or set up, or whatever needs attention at the moment. Most importantly, all parents can encourage their daughters to take advantage of IGNITE opportunities.

Recruiting parents is relatively easy. Once a chapter has held its first Presentation and parents hear their daughters talking about the event, some may contact the school or chapter coordinator directly. Parents can also be approached through the Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA); inviting IGNITE girls to speak at a PTSA meeting is always a good idea. (Parents are much more receptive to programs that already have proven kid-appeal than to those touted only by adults.) Some parents will also become involved from the corporate side of IGNITE. One Microsoft speaker, impressed with the IGNITE concept and frustrated because her family lived in Pierce County where the program was not available, started a chapter herself so that her daughter and the daughter's friends could experience the IGNITE magic. Another active volunteer is the mother of two sons; even without a daughter of her own, she participates in IGNITE simply because she believes so strongly in the program.

2.4

"Teachers love IGNITE too. It is a whole different way of looking at teaching and learning. We started this program for the girls, but we have all—teachers and administrators alike—gained from the experience."

— Barbara Moore
Principal
South Lake High School

Educators

Anyone working in a high school today recognizes that teenage girls are not enrolling in engineering and technology classes. Adults, both in and outside of education, realize the consequences of this apparent lack of interest. Women are seriously underrepresented in engineering and technology-related industries. However, with the ubiquitous presence of computers in society today, the decision not to acquire some high-tech skills needlessly limits girls' opportunities for success.

🔥 IGNITE Reinforces Educational Goals

Over the last two decades, girls have shown a continued reluctance to embrace engineering and technology. IGNITE has a proven record of accomplishment in reversing the trend. IGNITE's methodology gets girls turned on to engineering and technology, and that methodology is most effective when supported by the active participation of individuals from every educational sector: administrators, teachers, secretaries, counselors, career specialists, para-educators, librarians, custodians, coaches, and other staff members.

From an educator's point of view, all IGNITE programs and events have significant educational value. Different types of activities complement the various learning styles of students, and the diversity of speakers at Presentation events allows each girl to make a personal connection to someone who reflects her own feelings and experiences.

Education is about individuals, not facts. IGNITE has found a successful way to connect to girls. The success of IGNITE is not only measured by students who go on to college and careers in technology and engineering, though that is certainly one important factor. The real success of IGNITE is found in every girl who discovers she is not alone in her frustrations and struggles., who Instead, she realizes she has control over her destiny, explores by exploring new pathways and prepares preparing for a career centered on her own interests and passions., and then gives back by sharing her experiences with the next generation of young women. True educators know that this is what teaching is ultimately about—molding thoughtful, articulate, skilled, and motivated adults. IGNITE members hope that every educator will want to both support and learn from this program.

🔥 District Level Support

The school district administrative center is a great source of speakers, event destinations, and networking connections. Involve district personnel who use technology—systems administrators or building maintenance supervisors, for example. If these individuals are women, they might be good Presentation speakers; otherwise, they may be members of professional associations that link them

to women in technology and engineering. District or state career and technology directors can also provide connections to business networks or professional associations.

🔥 Benefits to the School

The benefits of an active IGNITE program to the sponsoring school are immediate and obvious. Students who have been apathetic or "lost" now have purpose and direction, enrollment in engineering and technology classes increases significantly, and there is a general redirection of teenage energy into positive channels. Beyond this improvement in the general climate, schools also benefit from the development of long-term corporate relationships. Through IGNITE, schools have found opportunities to make their needs known to corporate women. In one instance, when a corporate presenter realized students were being taught on antiquated equipment, she was able to use her connections to arrange a donation of an entire state-of-the-art computer lab.

🔥 Teacher Benefits

IGNITE not only benefits the school as a whole, it also offers participating teachers a firsthand look at the realities of the workplace. Barbara Moore, principal of South Lake High School, explains it this way:

"As educators, we teach how we were taught. But teachers who go on IGNITE field trips see what the students will face when they are in the work world. For example, teachers on a field trip to Microsoft saw that their people work in teams, so teaching students to work as teams is very important. We now do project-based learning because that is what the corporations are looking for. Through field trips to Microsoft, both students and teachers were able to see the benefit of project-based learning. They see how the things we do at school actually relate to the real world they will soon face."

> **Cathi's Comments**
> *School counselors are another essential support. Counselors are the gatekeepers to class registration—they need to be aware that young women are underrepresented in engineering and technology classes and that, with their support, IGNITE can reverse this trend.*

IGNITE networks have also provided professional development opportunities for teachers. IGNITE coordinators have organized job shadowing experiences for educators during school breaks, using the same networking contacts that provide opportunities for the girls. Job shadowing serves the dual pur-

pose of enabling teachers to stay abreast of advances in technology while providing the opportunity to earn "clock hours" or continuing education credits. (Requirements for credit or clock hours vary by district and/or state. Contact your school district office or state department of education for specifics.)

Participation in IGNITE events has been as beneficial for teachers as for students. Some teachers have even decided to pursue second careers at the technology companies they have visited.

🔥 Anyone Can Light the Fire

While it is natural to assume that engineering and technology teachers or the career center specialists would be the most obvious coordinator for an IGNITE chapter, the IGNITE leader can be any person who is passionate about giving girls an opportunity to explore engineering and technology careers. In one school district, the school secretary volunteered to be the IGNITE coordinator because she had a passion for providing girls with an opportunity she felt she had missed.

No matter who organizes the IGNITE chapter in a school, they need to collaborate with teachers, counselors, and other staff. Career center specialists and business, marketing, technology and engineering teachers may have already established connections with individuals or resources beneficial to the IGNITE program. Teachers in science, math, and other subjects can provide insight into the curriculum being taught and what programs/activities work in their classroom. Counselors play a pivotal role in helping students choose their classes.

It is also important to introduce and explain the IGNITE program to administrators and district personnel. This is simply good public relations policy. Spreading the word can also garner much needed support. Administrators and district personnel may have access to valuable corporate or community resources. Be sure to invite administrators and district personnel to the first IGNITE Presentation so they can witness firsthand the excitement it generates.

People who really are committed to the philosophy and goals of IGNITE nearly always agree that the benefit they receive from the program equals or exceeds the support they provide. According to Principal Barbara Moore, IGNITE is good for all girls, regardless of their ethnicity, economic status, or learning style. IGNITE is also good for schools in general and for teachers in particular. To quote,

> "I've seen what IGNITE has done for students; I've seen them come alive. I've seen IGNITE give them hope. IGNITE plants seeds that grow and flourish. And it is important for administrators and teachers to get out into the real world, to get in touch with what is beyond our four walls so that we prepare our students for what they will face tomorrow."

"What do being a Harley biker chick, a high-level certified network engineer, a teenage runaway, and an artist all have in common? They are all parts of my life story."

— Mo Rozenhart
Network Engineer
T-Mobile

Corporate Women

Industry needs talented workers. Women make up 50 percent of the population and nearly the same percentage of the workforce, yet the number of girls choosing engineering and technology careers lags far behind the increasing availability of these jobs. Women bring different perspectives and experiences to industry. Companies cannot afford to let so many talented and intelligent girls pass them by. Getting teenage girls excited about engineering and technology significantly increases the number who later choose programs preparing them for satisfying and productive careers. Schools share the same mission as most industries: to foster integrity, tenacity, and pride-of-product in a collaborative, productive environment. Corporate involvement in IGNITE supports that mission. And IGNITE works. Since its inception in 2000, IGNITE has increased the number of girls choosing engineering and technology classes from virtually none to an average of half the current enrollment.

Cathi's Comments

The corporate women involved with IGNITE during its first six years comment that they are surprised at how much fun they have, how meaningful their interactions with the girls have been, and how telling their stories makes them fall in love with their jobs all over again. IGNITE is fun, both for the corporate participants and for the girls. What could be better than a motivational, educational program that is fun, simple, and achieves what it sets out to do?

🔥 Starting a Corporate IGNITE Chapter

No rule requires IGNITE chapters to start in schools.[1] The first request for help starting a corporate-based IGNITE chapter resulted from something women do naturally, networking. An IGNITE Presenter shared the IGNITE concept with colleagues at a technical conference. Intrigued, and seeing the potential benefit of IGNITE for their own companies or communities, these women wanted chapters for their local middle and high schools, too. With guidance from experienced IGNITE members, chapters have formed in Idaho, Arizona, California, and counties throughout the Puget Sound Region in Washington.

Since IGNITE always uses the same collaborative model, starting a chapter from industry is not much different from starting one within a school. If you have been out of touch with the school system for awhile, here are some suggestions for reconnecting:

1) Check online to see if the school you are interested in has a website. If so, spend a few minutes familiarizing yourself with information about programs and staff. Then call the school and ask to speak with a career and technical

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[1] Detailed instructions for starting a chapter are found in Section 3, general planning guidelines are outlined in Section 4, and specifics regarding presentations and other events are found in Sections 5 and 6.

education teacher, school counselor, or career center person. Explain your desire to get an IGNITE chapter started.

2) Be persistent. You may need to talk to a few people before you find the person who says, "Wow, that sounds great! I'd love to work with you on that."

3) When you get the "Wow" response (or anything similar), set up a meeting with that educator and begin planning an IGNITE Presentation for the school using the resources in this Toolkit.

4) Set up a meeting with your work supervisor or manager to explain the IGNITE program. You want to get their buy-in and support since the women involved will miss a bit of work on the day of the Presentation.

5) Recruit other women on your work team or in your company to help you and the educator(s) plan an initial IGNITE Presentation.

6) Invite your manager to the Presentation so he or she can see what a wonderful experience IGNITE is for young girls.

🔥 Hosting Other IGNITE Events

Once you have held a successful Presentation, all the talk will be about getting girls out to your campus for a field trip or job shadow.

•   A field trip should be an educational experience that shows women actively engaged in some type of technology or engineering. Does your company have something relevant to see? Are there enough women in the company to help girls see the possibilities for engineering and technology in their own futures? Be sure you have plenty of technology available to see or touch.

•   Technology and engineering are fascinating if explained by the right person—someone who understands teenagers as well as the subject matter. A server room explained through teen-relevant analogies can be as fascinating as the newest cell phone. If your company has only office space, determine what in those offices would be both educational and *fun*.

•   Hands-on activities are wonderful for teaching young girls how things work—can you provide a project or other hands-on experience?

- When deciding on job shadow opportunities, know that almost any job involving technology and engineering will be of interest to students. Even though you lament that you are in meetings all day, you will be surprised to discover that students think meetings are very cool. Meetings involve problem solving and students love that. A job shadow student may even remind you how much fun meetings can be.

- Check with your legal department to find out if girls need to sign non-disclosure forms before visiting your corporate campus. Also check with human resources regarding any other requirements or guidelines for hosting student guests.

- Get men involved. Impassioned men who understand the need for girls to be successful in engineering and technology careers make great allies. Since men constitute such a large percentage of workers in most companies, please include them in IGNITE events your company hosts. Someone will ask the men why they are involved, so suggest that they be prepared to explain why they think it is important for girls to be interested in engineering and technology. If they can relate their answer to a female family member or friend, all the better.

At technology companies in the Seattle area where IGNITE was born, girls have been given access to tech labs and Cisco Systems server rooms, and invited to visit Microsoft's television and recording studios, as well as the Microsoft Home of the Future, Office of the Future, and Global Networking Center. The important thing is for them to see engineering and technology in action so they understand why they need to take advantage of the programs offered in their own schools.

Your company may not be Microsoft but, like Microsoft, it also needs smart, dedicated employees. Collaborating with IGNITE is good for business, especially when the IGNITE girls you host grow into women who return to you as successful employees.

2.6

"If I had not been in IGNITE, I wouldn't have met so many people in industry, especially women in network engineering. I met many different people through IGNITE events and worked with students and adults from different high schools and different companies."

— Candy Chiang
Student

Community Connections

Regardless of a chapter's status—whether it is school or corporate based, parents play an active role or not, or it serves 30 girls or 300—collaboration with other community organizations is the surest route to success.

🔥 Colleges, Universities, and Trade Schools

Community colleges and local universities are natural IGNITE allies. After all, today's high school girls are tomorrow's campus freshmen. Part of the magic of IGNITE is seeing the girls develop a passion for higher education which, in turn, increases the success of colleges and universities in attracting and graduating serious, career-oriented students. To get the collaborative ball rolling, leadership team members should visit campuses and share the IGNITE vision and success story with appropriate instructors, professors, and deans. If an IGNITE student—perhaps a girl who is currently enrolled (or intending to enroll) in the school's program because of her IGNITE experience—also speaks, so much the better. Colleges may also have previously established connections with local companies. Use these connections to expand the chapter network.

IGNITE Seattle currently sponsors field trips to the University of Washington and yearly conferences at Seattle Community College, but consider other, less traditional institutions as well. In Seattle, for example, we have the Cornish College of the Arts. Besides training the next generation of singers for Broadway or the Met, Cornish offers a degree in Performance Production—plenty of technology opportunities there! Or consider the Art Institute of Seattle (Chicago, Boise, wherever), which offers both Associate and Bachelor degrees in areas such as Digital Design, Industrial Design Technology, and Video Production.

Technical colleges, trade schools, and other vocational institutions also make good allies. Technical colleges may be especially interested in increasing the percentage of women in their programs (and they may have access to state or federal monies to help accomplish this). Think beyond the obvious. It may not seem that a massage therapist or sous chef needs much in the way of technology training. As the therapist's business grows, however, she may want to create a website, a newsletter, or other informational or marketing materials. And what if that chef needs to design a more efficient kitchen or set up an automated ordering system for basic foodstuffs? Opportunities for technology abound in every career sector. Drawing Presentation speakers from a wide range of careers dramatically increases the connections and the magic.

🔥 Local Businesses and Organizations

Corporate collaborations are powerful, but so are connections to local businesses, especially in smaller communities. Try a letter or telephone campaign to create immediate awareness of the IGNITE program and recruit representatives of local tech-oriented businesses. Also find out what kinds of scholarships, internships, and job shadowing programs currently exist in the community and then expand those through these new business connections.

Nearly every community also includes numerous other non-business organizations dedicated to helping youth. These include the Boys and Girls Club, 4-H, YWCA, Girl Scouts, and Campfire Girls. Approach leaders of these organizations to explore how the IGNITE program might benefit their organization even as their support benefits IGNITE.

🔥 The Media

Use the local media—newspaper, radio, TV, regional or city magazines, city website, whatever your community offers—to increase awareness of IGNITE and its success in your community. The resource section of the IGNITE website includes a press release template [2.6/press]. Use this to announce the formation of a new chapter, advertise upcoming events, and share individual success stories. If used appropriately, the media can be both a significant support and an effective promotional tool.

🔥 Section 3

Starting a Chapter

"*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*"

— Margaret Mead
Anthropologist

3.1

"IGNITE is important because it tells girls that they matter and should never consider backing down from what they truly want. That it is okay to be who they are and do something different from everyone else."

— Mo Rozenhart
Network Engineer
T-Mobile

Chapter Guidelines

The IGNITE mission is to inspire girls to consider and prepare for careers in technology and engineering or careers utilizing, involving, or related to technology. Students, parents, teachers, and women in technology and engineering careers all volunteer time and talents to contribute to our success. IGNITE derives its energy from collaboration:

- Networking with employees in local business and large corporations

- Developing lifelong friendships

- Knowing there is someone available when you need information or assistance

- Encouraging and promoting other IGNITE members and volunteers

It's the camaraderie and friendship developed within chapters and with local communities that keeps the IGNITE flame burning.

As you build and manage your chapter, please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- IGNITE is dedicated to motivating and supporting young women exclusively. It is therefore imperative that all IGNITE functions be oriented towards girls only.

- Each chapter must host Personal Presentation events for teenage girls in the local community and/or school system. Although these Presentations have so far been primarily for high school girls, chapters in middle or junior high schools are certainly encouraged.

- In addition to the required Presentations, chapters need to create programs and activities unique to their region and member talent pool. For example, members in farming communities might consider inviting a panel of telecommuters to interact with girls, explaining how it is now possible to enjoy a rural lifestyle with a big-city job and salary. A chapter in the Los Angeles area might want to introduce girls to the myriad of technology-dependent jobs supporting the film industry.

- While the goal of IGNITE is to turn young women toward careers in technology and engineering, the participation of men in support roles is definitely encouraged. For obvious reason, the speakers at Presentations must be women. Men can provide introductions to potential speakers and they are welcome to attend the Presentations, but the actual participants must be women so the girls can make the personal connections so vital to the success of IGNITE. Men can also be involved in field trips, job shadows, and other non-Presentation events.

- Each chapter needs a primary contact person or coordinator. This person is required to register the chapter at www.ignite-us.org.

- Chapter members should meet at least once a quarter for progress reports, brainstorming sessions, program evaluations, and other chapter business. Written reports of these meetings should be sent to members who cannot attend.

- Each chapter must set up its own e-mail alias for communication among its members and volunteers. Information explaining how to do this is available at the IGNITE Worldwide site.

- Chapters are required to submit a report after each event, posting that report on the chapter web pages and sending copies to members and volunteers on the chapter list-serve.

- Chapter leaders and members are expected to share responsibilities and not rely too heavily on any one member. Each member must determine her own level of commitment and follow through as best possible. If circumstances alter a member's level of commitment, this should be communicated to the chapter coordinator as soon as possible so that other arrangements can be made.

- All chapter members are encouraged to seek opportunities to interface with the technology and engineering community. Larger companies often host conferences or activities, such as Microsoft's Women in Technology Night, that are perfect venues for an IGNITE spokesperson. If you can't be an official, on-the-program speaker, attend and spread the word informally. Every member contact strengthens the chapter's networking web, so get out there!

3.2

"I would encourage every school to have an IGNITE program to draw upon. IGNITE is worth the time and energy because the payoff is so good. It gives girls hope, confidence, and a chance to see the opportunities available to them. For my kids, it was phenomenal."

— Barbara Moore
Principal
South Lake High School

Chapter Coordinator

The chapter coordinator plays a pivotal role in IGNITE. She passionately carries the torch that will ignite her school, company, or community with the fire that enables all girls to succeed. This section includes information and tips about expectations, the leadership team, meetings, programs and events, resource management, community awareness, volunteer management, communication, and conflict resolution.

🔥 Expectations

One of the strengths of the IGNITE program is that the expectations for each chapter coordinator are the same worldwide. In order to maintain active chapter status and the right to operate under the IGNITE name, each chapter coordinator must do the following:

- Register a new chapter at www.ignite-us.org.

- Plan and facilitate a Presentation Event within the school year that the chapter is organized.

- Create web pages on the IGNITE Worldwide website and post a report of the Presentation and each subsequent chapter event.

Those are the requirements. If the chapter coordinator also follows the guidelines below, her job will be easier and she is likely to have more support from the community.

- Understand that IGNITE is a collaborative effort.

- Introduce yourself as a representative of IGNITE to school personnel: teachers (especially those involved in business, marketing, and technology programs), guidance counselors, career center specialists, and administration.

- Explain what IGNITE is and why you're motivated to start a chapter.

- Inform people within the business community of your goals and strategies and enlist their support.

🔥 Collaboration

Whether the chapter coordinator works in education, industry, or comes from the community, her first responsibility is to realize that IGNITE is a collaborative program requiring the support and effort of many people—people who understand that girls need opportunities to succeed in school now so that they are prepared to accept opportunities for successful careers in the future.

If you are reading this material, it's probably because you are either considering becoming an IGNITE chapter coordinator or have already made that decision and are seeking help to move forward. In either case, it is important that you first decide what kind of need your IGNITE chapter will fulfill. Determine what is currently being done, either through the school district or community-based programs, to help girls connect with classes or programs that introduce them to career opportunities in technology and engineering.

> **Cathi's Comments**
>
> *When a chapter's just starting, it's nice to meet informally a few times. People will expect one person to hold ultimate responsibility. A chapter coordinator needs to know she has a choice of running things herself or delegating.*

Once you understand the current status and potential need in your school or community, introduce yourself and the IGNITE concept to people in the following organizations:

- Middle, junior high, and high schools

- Industry, especially technology-related companies

- Community resources like local universities, colleges, technical schools and/or community colleges

- Social or service based youth groups

As you introduce the IGNITE concept, you will discover people within one or all of these organizations who will become IGNITE partners as speakers, members of your leadership team, or behind-the-scene supporters. Once you have gathered your collaborators and supporters, you can begin to organize the chapter.

🔥 The Leadership Team

Once people support the IGNITE concept, the job of selecting key members for a leadership team is easy. Choose people who share your passion and understand the IGNITE expectations. Define the role of the people who are offering support or help—do they want to be very involved or just a little?

Respect the needs of the people who choose to volunteer, assigning tasks based on their expressed level of participation. Then divvy up the responsibilities according to the interests and talents of the group you've recruited: Who will find the speakers? Secure the space? Get food? Handle publicity?

Delegation, cooperation, and communication are the hallmarks of a successful IGNITE team.

🔥 Initial Meetings

Initial meetings should solidify the understanding of each team member's responsibilities in order to begin planning the first Presentation. Meetings can be informal gatherings or online chats and brainstorming sessions, but they should always have a clear goal. Respect your volunteers by striving to always begin and end meetings on time.

As your chapter grows, it is likely that meetings will yield fabulous ideas based on the experience and creativity of your volunteers. While it's great to brainstorm, you will have a greater chance of forming a successful chapter if you initially keep the creative energy focused on planning Presentations,. More events will come later. Good Presentations pave an easy road to success. The following meeting suggestions have worked for others:

- Frequency: as often as necessary to get the work done.

- Format: whatever works best for your situation, your style, your community, and your volunteers. Face-to-face meetings are good fun, bonding experiences and should be scheduled at times convenient for most volunteers. Online meetings allow busy people to stay involved and actively working toward a chapter goal. Not all meetings have to follow the same format—decide as a group what works best for you.

- Essentials for creating effective meetings:

  1) Have a written agenda with a specific meeting goal, such as finding speakers for the next Presentation. When possible, send the agenda out ahead of time to allow for revisions prior to the meeting.

  2) Let volunteers know how long the meeting will last and stick to that time. Factor in time, perhaps five or ten minutes, for visiting; then get down to business so that those who must get on to other things do not miss the essential information.

3) Assign tasks and dates for the completion of tasks. Review and confirm this information in the last five minutes of the meeting as a way to conclude the formal business portion. This allows people with other commitments to move on gracefully. Those who wish to can stay and visit as time allows.

4) Send a follow-up e-mail with assignments and due dates.

🔥 IGNITE Worldwide

Once you form a chapter, you must register at www.ignite-us.org. A copy of the online form [3.2/reg] is found in the Toolkit appendix. An annual registration fee is also required at this time. Check the website for the current amount.

Later you will post event reports to your chapter's web pages on the IGNITE Worldwide site. Listing your chapter's accomplishments, especially when accompanied by pictures and/or participants' comments, provides ideas and inspiration for other chapters. The IGNITE Worldwide website is a resource for every chapter where chapter members can network to share ideas or get advice. Staying in touch with IGNITE headquarters will help your chapter grow in size and success.

3.3

"When the teachers at Cisco Academy introduced me to IG-NITE, I jumped at the chance to be involved, knowing that would lead to a visit to Microsoft."

— Vicky Ho
UW Graduate
Now in Geography Information Systems

Program Overview

The IGNITE program offers a variety of events and activities ranging from one-on-one mentoring to two-day conferences with 100 girls in attendance. Detailed explanations of these events are found in Sections 5 and 6, but here are a few of the highlights.

Personal Presentations

Cathi's Comments

Most Presentation speakers will want to do more—perhaps have girls visit their workplace or set up a job shadow. Go with the flow.

Personal Presentations are the heart of IGNITE and the starting point for every new chapter. Simply put, Presentations are women in technology and engineering telling their stories to middle and high school girls. As the girls listen to these stories, they begin to change their perceptions of themselves and what they have accomplished—right before our eyes! They see women who look like they do, they hear women explain how they have overcome obstacles just like obstacles the girls are facing, and they unconsciously begin to see themselves as these women. The interaction is magic, pure magic.

Ideally, Presentations will be held in the local school. Here are a few suggestions to ensure success:

1) Understand and respect the fact that there is a learning curve for both planners and speakers.

2) Get school administration involved. Schools often have federal and/or state mandates to provide nontraditional activities for students. IGNITE satisfies these mandates. Engage the principal, assistant principal, career center specialists, counselors, and teachers to gather suggestions and support. Be sure these people receive invitations to all IGNITE events.

3) If possible, plan your first Presentation with at least a two month lead time. Try to schedule Presentations the week before students register for classes, or at least allow enough time for them to request a schedule change. This gives girls who become IGNITE-d the opportunity to sign up for available technology and engineering classes.

4) Realize that girls who attend the Presentation will want to do something (sign up for a class, talk to an academic or career counselor) immediately after the Presentation. Ensure that these opportunities are available.

5) Choose the Presentation facilitator carefully. She needs to understand that her job is to create a safe space for both speakers and students.

🔥 Other Events

Once your chapter has planned and executed successful Presentations in your community, you can add other events. Activities like job shadowing or field trips are often a natural outgrowth of successful Presentations. These events require careful planning, but are well worth the effort because they get girls into the real-world work environments of women they have already connected with. Numerous other activity suggestions, including college visits, internships, and conferences, are presented in Section 6.

Creating an Events Calendar will not become a significant issue until your chapter is mature enough to offer a variety of activities. When you have multiple Presentations along with field trips and job shadowing events, creating an Events Calendar allows you to track multiple timelines and deadlines. Each event on the calendar requires its own checklist of volunteers, tasks, and completion dates. As the chapter grows, the events calendar will ensure that all IGNITE events provide the most positive educational and inspirational experience possible for the girls who participate, the hosting school or business, and the community at large.

🔥 Budgeting and Resource Management

A budget is helpful, but not required, for a Presentation event. Volunteers can manage a cost-free Presentation when schools donate the necessary meeting space. However, while it is not mandatory to have a budget before organizing initial Presentations, it is helpful to have some spending money. A budget gives you options. If you choose to hold a Presentation during a lunch period, you will need money to purchase food for everyone attending. A budget will also cover the cost of publicity flyers or class coverage for teachers facilitating a Presentation or attending a field trip or other off-campus event.

Budgeting and resource management are essential to creating a growing, healthy chapter. Depending on the regulations of your school or organization, you may need to open a dedicated IGNITE bank account. Simple accounting control systems, like requiring two signatures for all checks, will ensure proper management of chapter funds. A simple budget worksheet [3.3/budget] is available on the website.

Individual chapters are nonprofit entities, so donations accepted by a local chapter and used solely for chapter expenses are tax deductible. With that in mind, be sure keep a receipt book available for small donations. Larger contributions should be acknowledged with a formal thank you letter [3.3/$thx], which doubles as a receipt for tax purposes. A letter requesting donations [3.3/$req] is available on the IGNITE website.

Opportunities for raising the funds needed to grow your chapter are found through collaboration with existing school and district programs, connections made at IGNITE events, and in community fundraisers.

Schools are required by federal mandates to provide nontraditional educational opportunities and to ensure gender equity in student opportunity. One source of money available to all schools is a Carl Perkins grant through the Department of Education. These grants are especially helpful for providing certified substitutes for teachers involved with IGNITE programs or events. Other possible funding sources include:

- School district monies, beyond Carl Perkins funds, budgeted for nontraditional programs. (IGNITE satisfies several federal mandates.)

- Vocational funding through local, state, or national departments of education.

- Community affairs departments of local businesses.

- *Professional associations* - These organizations often have the ability to choose to support local initiatives that coincide with their professional interests. Check with your community's technology or engineering councils and local chapters of organizations such as the Society of Women Engineers, American Association of University Women, Association for Women in Computing, Graphic Artist Guild, Society of Professional Journalists, or any number of women's organizations such as sorority alumnae chapters or the Junior League.

- *Local businesses* - Ask Presentation speakers coming from industry if their company has community resource grants that might apply to your program.

- Ask vendors who might supply printing or food if they would consider a donation or reduced rate.

- *Big Business* - Some corporations have separate budgets for community grants and promotional money. If you can tie your event to a promotional opportunity for a corporation, you might be able to uncover extra financial support. Promotional dollars may

also be helpful as your chapter matures and you want to participate in trade shows and conferences by partnering with corporate sponsors.

- *Grants* - Several federal and state agencies offer grants for the purposes of equity and increased participation of underrepresented groups in computer science, technology, and engineering. The website *www.grants.gov* provides additional information. The IGNITE website, www.ignite-us.org, also distributes notices of grant opportunities.

> **Cathi's Comments**
> *Ask your speakers and volunteers to ask their bosses and friends to make donations. For example, one of our early Microsoft volunteers used her team's office fund to finance our first field trip to Microsoft.*

Sometimes funding may be hard to find. In order to reap the full benefits of IGNITE, however, it is necessary to move beyond in-school Presentations and get the girls into the work environments of the women they have connected with. If you find yourself thinking that's just not possible, consider these words from Principal Barbara Moore:

> "*Find the money.* It's that important. It is important for administrators, for teachers, and especially for the girls who light up when they are exposed to the real world. It is amazing to see the hope that these out-of-school experiences provide. In education, we're about preparing students for the future. Their future is very different from the future we faced. We do a disservice to our students, to our young ladies in particular, when we don't offer programs that give them an experience like IGNITE. *Take the girls out of the building. Get them beyond the four walls of your school.*"

3.4

"IGNITE is a wonderful example of one of those networks that I have used to find my own role models and to make many lasting relationships and connections."

— Charmell Slaughter
Personal Development Facilitator
East Coast Regional Coordinator, IGNITE U.S.

Community Participation

As we have indicated before, IGNITE is a collaborative effort. The more you work with stakeholders throughout your community, the more successful your efforts will be. Learn the unique characteristics of your community and capitalize on them. Develop and nurture relationships with other schools, local community colleges and universities, mentors, students, teachers, and parents. These contacts will allow you to identify potential Presentation speakers. Be creative. Introduce the IGNITE concept to a wide range of people so that when girls attend Presentations, they will learn about a wide range of career possibilities.

🔥 Networking

The broader your collaborative network, the more quickly you can create success for your chapter. The Community Resource Identifier [3.4/commID] will help you identify potential collaborators. Introduce the IGNITE concept through meetings, phone calls, or letters to the many community-based organizations that can provide natural IGNITE collaborators and supporters. Some of these are:

- Businesses and networking organizations that promote programs for girls and women

- Regional and/or national organizations such as Northwest Girls Coalition, Teach for America, and Puget Sound Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology

- Technical colleges

- Community colleges

- Local industries with people working in technology and engineering

- Technology and engineering related community programs for children or youth

- Rotary Clubs or Chambers of Commerce

- The YWCA, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, and Boys & Girls Clubs of America

- Literacy programs and minority achievement programs

- Community libraries, who are also great partners to provide computer access

Develop community awareness by accessing the local media. The Resources section of the IGNITE website contains a press release template [2.6/press], giving basic information about IGNITE and the Presentation you are publicizing. Fill in the specific details and fax the release to the appropriate media. Follow up your press release with calls to editors, reporters, or producers to encourage them

to cover your event. The response to your release will depend on your persistence, the size of your community, and the space or air time traditionally devoted to community events by local media.

Community newspapers can become your best friend. These smaller papers want to promote positive community programs like IGNITE. Be sure to follow the press release with a call to the editor or education reporter. School and corporate newsletters are another venue for promotion and publicity.

As you develop a network of community resources, keep in mind the kinds of programs or future events you want to develop for your chapter. Learn what kinds of scholarship, internship, and job shadowing programs already exist and partner with them.

🔥 Volunteer Management

IGNITE chapters work because of the passion of volunteers who want girls to succeed. Teachers, counselors, corporate women, career center specialists, school administrators and support staff, local business folks, and parents are all potential volunteers. Every volunteer has his or her own reason for wanting girls to succeed, but all remember the challenges of adolescence. IGNITE gives volunteers a chance to do small things that make a big difference in the lives of teenage girls.

People volunteer for a variety of reasons—some for the sense of community it provides, others because they see their service directly impacting other lives, and others because they feel an obligation to "give back" after achieving their own success. One underlying reason, especially for women, is simply to "make a difference." While volunteers seek varying levels of involvement, they all generally want to do something that makes them feel good while providing service to someone else. Understanding each volunteer's motivation allows you to determine how his or her talents and skills can most effectively benefit both the chapter and the individual volunteer. Anyone who supports the mission of IGNITE can, and should, be a volunteer. While only women can speak at Presentations, men are always welcome as volunteers and supporters of IGNITE.

The following list identifies the most common types of volunteers:

- Core supporters

- "Call when you're in a pinch" helpers

- Financial contributors

- Presentation

- Mentors

- Job shadow

- College students or faculty

- Folks who'll do "anything you need"

Using volunteers in a way that matters to them will strengthen their commitment and keep them involved. Try to understand each individual's need for flexibility, service, and community participation—this will help you use your volunteers most effectively so that IGNITE may serve them as they serve IGNITE.

> **Cathi's Comments**
>
> *Be sure to get the girls themselves involved. Have them set up the room and give out flyers. Kids listen to kids. Give them flyers, and they'll bring you more girls. Kids can also write content for your web pages, telling stories of their experiences at events. Older students can return to speak to younger students. Many IGNITE graduates are, in fact, returning as volunteers in various capacities.*

As soon as volunteers identify themselves, have them fill out the volunteer questionnaire [3.4/VQ] so that you know the level of involvement they desire. The questionnaire also provides space to record career-related information. With the volunteer's permission, sharing this information with others in the chapter provides valuable professional networking opportunities.

Volunteer questionnaires let you know who will be available to help plan, organize, and execute Presentations and other events. They help you identify those who want involvement only as speakers or mentors, those who can help with web development and maintenance, and those who can help raise money. There is no task too large or too small to delegate to a volunteer. Many hands make light work for everyone.

Keeping volunteers informed keeps them involved. Your listserve becomes an excellent tool for keeping volunteers both informed and involved. The volunteer sign-up letter [3.4/VQ] is another excellent tool. Send this to all volunteers as soon as the year's event calendar is in place. Also remember to invite students to volunteer as appropriate; they are capable and appreciate the opportunity to be involved.

🔥 Appreciation

Volunteers remain with an organization for many reasons, but two are mentioned repeatedly: they have fun, and what they do has meaning. Everything IGNITE does has a serious impact: getting girls on the right track for college, introducing them to careers that will need them, and getting them to dream big dreams. But IGNITE also works because it is fun—fun for both the women and the girls. Telling stories is fun. Mentoring girls is fun. Job shadowing is fun. Internships are fun. Whatever you do, have fun.

Although IGNITE Presentation speakers receive immediate feedback via comments on the evaluation sheets, a formal acknowledgement of appreciation is encouraged. This can be as simple as a kind word or a thank you note, or as elaborate as an awards dinner. Many volunteers work for the simple pleasure of it, but sincere thanks for a job well done assures a volunteer that his or her service is valued, not simply assumed or expected.

IGNITE is not just a network of teenage girls; it is network of overlapping circles connecting these girls to women in education, industry, and the community. As IGNITE graduates move on to college and beyond, they should be encouraged to stay involved, both for the resources IGNITE can provide them and because they are developing their own stories to tell the younger girls. Over time, your best volunteers may be the girls who connect their current success to an IGNITE event from years ago.

The last word about volunteers is that they leave. Many stay, but others do not, and that is okay. People give what they can when they can.

🔥 Communication and Conflict Resolution

Whenever people gather for any reason, there is the potential for conflict. Even people working toward the same goals may differ in priorities and practices. Good communication—especially good listening—builds relationships and resolves conflict.

If you find yourself in conflict with a volunteer, it is a good idea to assume the following:

- For every problem or issue, there exists a resolution that is acceptable to all.

- Active listening skills will identify both the problem and the acceptable solution.

- A solution is reached more quickly when those involved remain focused on the problem and not on personalities.

- Everyone involved in IGNITE is doing his or her best to support the mission of the program. If an e-mail or conversation seems antagonistic or inappropriate, assume your colleagues mean well, even if their communication is imperfect.

- People have different styles of performance and communication. These styles are not inherently right or wrong, just different. Each style has its strengths and weaknesses. Concentrate on the strengths and tolerate the weaknesses with the knowledge that your weaknesses are probably annoying someone else.

- Compromise is good; it creates win-win solutions.

The key to good relationships—whether you're building, maintaining, or repairing them—is to listen. Understand where others are coming from. Allow them to be who they are and to give what they can, then adjust and move on.

🔥 Section 4

Planning for Success

"*It is better to look ahead and prepare than to look back and regret.*"

— Jackie Joyner Kersee
Athlete

Patience and perseverance are vital to successful event planning. If IGNITE events are new to your school, corporation, or community, you might receive several "we can't do that" responses to initial requests. Understand that the success of each event you host will diminish this negativity. As IGNITE gains acceptance, the planning path will become well worn and smooth. Soon colleagues, teachers, and staff will be calling *you* to ask, "Hey, when is the next IGNITE event?"

Ten Basic Steps

Planning any event is a relatively simple process. While the specific details vary in relation to the type of event—Presentation, workshop, conference, seminar, summer camp, etc.—the methodology remains constant. Realize that more complex events do require more time.

The ten basic steps necessary to plan any event are listed below and explained on the pages that follow.

1) Set a goal and draw up a basic plan.

2) Establish a chronology of deadlines.

3) Choose venues and vendors (if needed).

4) Contact and secure guest speakers and/or other featured participants.

5) Create a budget.

6) Delegate responsibilities.

7) Market the event.

8) Execute the event.

9) Report.

10) Evaluate and replicate.

🔥 STEP 1: Set a Goal and Make a Plan

Set a specific goal for each event. Understand and articulate what you want your event to do or teach. Outlining the goal helps determine the actions that constitute your plan. For example, for a Presentation event the goal might simply be to create connections between teenage girls and women in technology and engineering by having these women share their personal stories.

Make a plan. Ask yourself *Who will work with me—from school, from industry, from the community?* Build your collaborative network first; then develop a plan together based on the following decisions:

> **Cathi's Comments**
> *Create an advisory group or leadership team. This group supports the chapter coordinator and carries out delegated tasks such as fund raising. My advisory group was responsible for creating a website, fundraising, and generating program ideas. They continue to help manage the growth of the chapter.*

- Choose a date. Check calendars—are there conflicts with standardized tests, early dismissals, sporting events, teacher planning days, or administrator responsibilities?

- Discuss possible locations and choose two or three viable options. Consider space requirements. The venue should be large enough for comfort yet small enough to ensure good communication. Space considerations will differ depending on the goal of the event. The library, career center, or an extra large classroom may be good options for a Presentation. A career fair, however, needs a larger space like a gymnasium, lunchroom, or large enclosed common area.

- Determine the length of the event. For a lunchtime Presentation, an hour and a half is sufficient, but a College & Scholarship Saturday will probably entail several hours. Determining the event time frame allows you to begin planning specific details. When allocating time within the event, be flexible enough to respond to situations as they arise, yet structured enough to avoid "dead time."

- Consider general management needs: permission forms, passes to excuse students from class, transportation arrangements, etc. Streamline these as much as possible. For example, the invitation flyer for a Presentation can include the entrance ticket and a pass that is signed by the teacher whose class is being missed. See the Resource section of the IGNITE website for a flyer template [5.1/flyer].

- Communicate with teachers. If IGNITE girls will miss classes, be sure teachers are informed well in advance. This is not only good manners, it also shows respect for classroom planning and invites good will and possible teacher participation.

🔥 STEP 2: Create a Detailed Timeline

Setting out a timeline based on your goal and plan will help keep tasks organized for better delegation and completion. Depending on the complexity of the event, you will want to create timelines that begin as far out as a year for something like chapter-sponsored summer camp, or three months for a Presentation. All event timelines can be condensed as necessary to accommodate unexpected change. However, longer timelines help keep stress to a minimum. More planning time allows for flexibility and increased ability to handle surprises.

If the event demands a long timeline, break up the tasks into logical, three month milestones: one year, nine month, six month, three month. All events require checklists of specific tasks to be completed at various dates prior to, on the day of, and immediately following the event. Timelines should also schedule time for follow-up and review of your event.

If you are an experienced event planner, you can condense all of the suggested timelines based on your experience, the relative complexity or simplicity of the event, and your particular school or community situation. An experienced event planner with a good network of speakers can plan a Presentation event in as little as two weeks. However, for those with limited event planning experience and those who are still developing their network of speakers, a longer timeline reduces stress and increases the likelihood of success.

A typical three month Presentation timeline might look like this:

- *3 months prior* – meet with volunteers; confirm goals and plans; delegate tasks; confirm date and room (with necessary equipment); begin to line up corporations or colleges with speakers you desire.

- *2 months prior* – confirm speakers; line up teacher allies; create invitations for girls.

- *1 month prior* – prepare speakers; investigate food options and place order.

- *2 weeks prior* – prepare and print flyer to invite girls; place flyers throughout the school; prepare sign-up sheets; personally invite school and/or district administrators, career center personnel, school counselors, and school board members; send speakers a

reminder e-mail with procedures for school security, expectations for their time commitment, and directions to the school.

- *1 week prior* – reconfirm room reservation; confirm food order; meet with volunteers to review duties and expectations.

- *Day before* – final confirmation/adjustment of food order; speak with custodial staff to confirm set-up needs; send reminder e-mail to speakers with directions and other key information; send reminder e-mail to school staff who were invited.

- *Day of* – check room for all necessary equipment; speak with school staff as necessary to facilitate food delivery; gather passes and other paperwork for Presentation facilitation; greet and settle in speakers.

- *At the event* – facilitate; ENJOY, be flexible, go with the flow, expect the unexpected; remember that you are dealing with human beings (and with teenagers—that means there will be some chaos).

- *Following day* – review student evaluations; write and post report; write and send thank yous.

- *Within the following week or two* – meet with leadership team and/or volunteers to discuss successes of the event, determine what aspects need improvement, and record this information for future reference and so that you (or others) can replicate the success and avoid unnecessary mistakes.

Note: Other types of events will obviously require more or less planning. Most of the planning for a corporate field trip, for example, is a collaborative effort between the chapter and the hosting company. (Usually, the chapter is responsible for transportation and overall briefing of expectations.) A conference requires extensive planning to coordinate speakers and workshop leaders, multiple locations within the main venue, and other details. See Section 6.1 for in-depth coverage of field trips and conferences.

🔥 STEP 3: Find a Venue and Order Food

Venue

You cannot hold any event without a proper space, so after setting a goal and sketching out a basic plan, review your location options and reserve the best space available. Remember to check with as many people as necessary to discover and resolve use conflicts that could interrupt or otherwise disturb the event. For

> **Cathi's Comments**
>
> *Remember that an auditorium is big and impersonal, so—even though the seats may be comfy—it may not be the preferred location. The more intimacy a space offers, the more likely it is to facilitate connections between presenters and girls.*

example, if drama students are planning to move sets into or out of the room adjacent to your Presentation space during your scheduled time, you might want to consider relocating.

When reserving your space, allow enough time for any setting up or removing of items specific to your event. Also allow time after your event to return the room to its common-use arrangement. If possible, have volunteers on hand for this specific purpose.

Once you have a venue, work with custodial and technology staff to plan the set up of the room and determine equipment needs. Confirm with custodial staff that you have allowed enough time in your room reservation for set up and break down. If you are serving food, ensure that the room you have chosen allows food. Adjust your reservation if necessary.

Be sure to request extra chairs for those who attend without signing up in advance. Know the fire code's maximum occupancy rating for the room you request. IGNITE events have been known to draw sixty girls when thirty have signed up. Have a back-up plan ready so you can accommodate as many girls as possible within safe limits.

Food

Ordering the right amount of food can be a challenge. Pizza is always a popular choice, but all large pizzas are not equally large, nor are all pizzas equally sliced. Find a vendor who will take time to help you order correctly (especially for the first event; it gets easier after that), who offers a good discount (you're going to order lots of pizza over the years), and who is reliable (cold pizza may be good breakfast fare, but you want yours piping hot).

Estimate quantity as if you were hosting people in your home. Feed each person enough to be satisfied. Two full-size slices of pizza per person is a good average. Don't forget to include volunteers, speakers, teachers, and other guests in your count. Your vendor should have the necessary experience to help you order correctly. Also ask the vendor to provide paper plates, cups, and napkins.

Order one drink per person. Have a variety of sodas, non-carbonated drinks, and water available. Two-liter containers are an inexpensive alternative to individual cans, but individual cans or bottles are more efficient and less messy.

Be sure to order extra food for girls who show up unexpectedly (this is quite common). It is always better to have too much than not enough. Place any extra food or drinks in the teacher's lounge with a note saying "Courtesy of IGNITE." This makes friends as you share the wealth.

Confirm your order and delivery instructions a week before the event and again on the day before.

🔥 STEP 4: Find & Prepare Participants

No matter what kind of event you plan, you will need to network and collaborate with other community groups, colleges, associations, or corporations to secure speakers and other adult participants. A full explanation of how to find and ask women to be Presentation speakers is found in Section 5.1.

Presenters at career or college fairs are experienced in events geared toward teenagers. They will require minimal preparation. Corporate women who speak at Presentation events may not have much experience interacting with middle or high school students. To help prepare them for the event, the IGNITE coordinator/facilitator can engage the women in conversations about what these girls really want to hear. The coordinator or facilitator can help a speaker identify the content of her presentation by asking questions such as these: *What were you like in high school? How did you decide what you would study in college? What obstacles did you face along the way? How did you overcome them? What is your career now? What is exciting to you about that career? What advice would you like to share with the girls that you wish you knew when you were in high school?* This conversation helps the speaker identify which parts of her story she wants to share with the girls. It is wise to follow up with an e-mail that includes these and similar questions for her to consider as she prepares her talk. The Resource section of the IGNITE website contains a list of these questions [5.1/spkr.prep] to send to potential speakers.

> **Cathi's Comments**
> *You will need to send out reminder e-mails to speakers before Presentations and other events. These should include all the information they need: time, date, location address, directions, and any instructions specific to the location (security check-in, for example).*

When choosing participants for any event, and especially for Presentations, it is extremely important that the women reflect the demographics of the girls in the audience. Diversity is paramount. If you have a large percentage of students from African-American, Asian, or other minority backgrounds, please invite speakers from that same demographic. We want the girls to see faces that resemble their own. Even in schools with little diversity within the student population, inviting speakers from diverse groups remains an important goal.

🔥 STEP 5: Create a Budget

In event planning, a budget covers the cost of venues, food, and marketing. Your budget will likely differ for each event. If the event takes place on school grounds, that significantly reduces the expense. For example, a lunchtime Presentation event held on the local school campus requires a budget of less than $200 to cover food and any paper and photocopying needs. A simple budget worksheet [3.3/budget] is available on the IGNITE website.

Also check with the heads of relevant departments, like tech-ed or the career center, for possible access to their budgets (another good reason to be very collaborative), or ask for a donation from corporate sponsors.

🔥 STEP 6: Delegate Responsibility

Collaboration is a hallmark of IGNITE. Delegate the organizational details to responsible and reliable volunteers. Delegation serves two purposes: it reduces individual workloads, and it provides meaningful tasks for volunteers who want to be active participants in IGNITE. Make task assignments based on the interests and skills of your volunteers. Establish good channels of communication with volunteers so that everyone knows his or her individual responsibilities and deadlines and understands how these responsibilities contribute to the overall plan.

Other IGNITE chapters have utilized volunteers as members of the following committees: strategic planning; specific event planning (i.e. Presentation committee or job shadow committee); web design and management; fund raising; and media/marketing. Use the volunteer questionnaire [3.4/VQ] to determine the best use of volunteer time and talent.

Strategic planning committees are helpful for new IGNITE chapters—they brainstorm ideas and plan for the growth of the chapter. Be clear about the purpose of any committee as well as the expectations for volunteer commitment. Use a collaborative model both within a committee and with school personnel, since their cooperation is vital to your chapter's success. Make it easy for the school to work with you; educators share your passion to create success for students and will happily support IGNITE if they are not required to take on additional tasks.

Volunteers should have fun and feel they are making a difference.

🔥 STEP 7: Market Your Event

Marketing helps get the story and success of IGNITE into the community. Local media can be a forum for your marketing. Try to place stories in the local community newspaper, in the school district newsletter, and in corporate newsletters. The more people who know about IGNITE, the bigger and better your network will become. A press release template [2.6/press] is included in the Resource section of the IGNITE website. After a press release is sent, a polite but persuasively persistent follow-up by phone will increase the likelihood of the story actually appearing in print.

Advertise IGNITE events through as many community venues as possible. Get information to the school district media contact, professional associations, women's groups, Girl Scouts, and any other organization that either targets girls or has prominent community presence. Invite media people to be guests or speakers at IGNITE events.

🔥 STEP 8: Execute the Event

Understand that not everything will go as planned. Relax, go with the flow, and enjoy the event. If you have planned well, everything will be fine even if it is not perfect. Remember, no one else knows exactly what you have planned. Participants will not miss what does not happen (except food, so plan that especially well).

More detailed explanations of event management are found in Section 5.2 (Hosting a Presentation) and Section 6 (Other Events).

🔥 STEP 9: Report

After each event, a report [5.3/rpt] must be posted at ignite-us.org. Appreciation for speakers and other participants or volunteers should be incorporated into the report. Thanking people individually for their specific contributions emphasizes the impact of each volunteer's involvement. Acknowledging individual efforts also helps create a community of people dedicated to IGNITE's progress and success.

Another key component of each report is the list of comments taken from the evaluation forms collected after the event. Though the event ends with enthusiastic applause and some girls linger afterwards to chat with speakers, the extent of impact is never fully realized until these comments are read. Often profound and moving, the comments show volunteers, speakers, and planners how deeply the experience has

Cathi's Comments

Reports became the pivotal way I was able to create an IGNITE community. With them, I can simultaneously thank presenters and provide feedback through the girls' comments. Also, everyone in IGNITE gets to experience every chapter's events by reading their reports. Reports have created much good will and enjoyment for all IGNITE members.

touched some of the girls—connections have been made, and the girls' words reflect that magic.

Written reports need not be lengthy, but they should be detailed enough to describe the essence of the event. Do not, however, reveal any personal information about presenters or students. First and last names for presenters are okay, but use only first names for students. File reports by posting them on your chapter's web page. If you have digital photographs from your event, please include them with your report. All submitted photos of students must be accompanied by a student photo release [2.6/stu.release].

Also encourage the girls, mentors, speakers, and volunteers to write their own reflections on the experience and post those on the web page as well.

STEP 10: Evaluate and Replicate

Within two weeks of any event, schedule a meeting with key planners to review what went well and what could have gone better. One way to build on your success is to review the planning *process*, connecting those steps to the strengths and weaknesses of the actual event. Which planning decisions improved the event? Did gaps in preparation lead to problems at the event? Will planning differently next time improve the event, or were the glitches truly the result of circumstances beyond your control? Keep good notes of this meeting for future reference.

And when everything is done… it's time to start planning the next event.

🔥 Section 5

Presentations—
The Heart of IGNITE

"The success of your presentation will be judged not by the knowledge you send but by what the listener receives."

5.1

"I was so nervous at my first Presentation. When I relaxed, so did the girls, and soon we were like good friends talking and sharing valuable information."

— Joanne Brandsma
Program Manager
Microsoft

Planning & Preparation

Presentations—women sharing their personal stories—introduce high school girls to role models in nontraditional and technical careers, or careers that incorporate technological components or computer-based work. When women recruited from industry tell their stories, young girls are ignited with hope, possibility, and a desire to dream.

🔥 Planning a Presentation

General planning guidelines for all events are outlined in Section 4. Listed below are the five essential steps in preparing for a Presentation event. Hosting and follow-up are explained in separate sections.

1) Choose a date and time.

2) Reserve appropriate space and equipment.

3) Invite and prepare speakers.

4) Invite girls and other selected guests.

5) Create an inviting and safe environment for speakers and students.

🔥 Choose a Date and Time

Avoiding conflicts is an obvious priority. As you gain more experience in event planning, you will also begin to recognize other subtleties of season, day, and time that influence the overall success of an event.

• Consult the school calendar to pick a date that does not compete with other events so that all girls who want to participate can.

> ### Cathi's Comments
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> *Women ask me all the time if they do the type of job we're looking for. They assume that the job has to be purely technical. I want to dispel that myth. Nearly every job today includes some form of technology. I believe it is very important to consider all careers that incorporate aspects of technology and engineering. Examples include technical writing, human resource management, sales of technology products, and the entertainment industry. Even lawyers need to be tech-savvy when dealing with intellectual property rights. With so many options, I am sure there is a technology-related job to suit every skill level and personality type. I want everyone to bury forever the idea that technology is a narrow career field; varying degrees of technologic skill are necessary in literally hundreds of jobs.*

- Realize that girls attending the Presentation will want to be able to do something immediately afterwards—sign up for a tech class, for example, or talk to an academic or career counselor. Communicate with counselors and the career center specialist to ensure that the girls' interests can be satisfied by programs available at their school.

- If possible, plan Presentations to occur the week before students register for classes, or at least allow enough lead time to make schedule changes. This gives girls who become IGNITE-d the opportunity to sign up for technology and engineering classes available in the immediate future.

- Ideally, at least one teacher and/or career center person should be part of the IGNITE team, helping to get the girls involved.

- It is best to have at least two full school periods available. Scheduling Presentation either during or including lunch periods allows time for more speakers and more interaction with the students.

- Food works. More than a few girls have come for the pizza and left with a dream.

- Inform the school principal, assistant principal, counselors, career center personnel, technology teachers, and other key staff of the date of the Presentation, so they can mark their calendars. If anyone has been only minimally involved up to this point, getting them to this event is especially important.

🔥 Reserve Appropriate Space and Equipment

If you expect fewer than thirty students, the library provides an intimate, comfortable setting. For larger groups, lecture classrooms can provide more space and still maintain the comfort and intimacy of smaller rooms. If a large crowd is expected, an auditorium may be necessary unless your high school has suitable common areas.

Work with the custodial staff to ensure the room is arranged according to your needs and specifications. Request all necessary equipment (overheads, monitors, computers, etc.) well in advance and re-confirm your equipment needs a week before the event.

Equipment requests and confirmations are vitally important. Even more important, however, is ensuring that the planning team has carefully considered and included all the technology that will be needed. Nothing is worse than suddenly having to announce "We'll just skip this part" because not

all the required equipment was requested. This indicates not only a lack of planning on your part but also a lack of consideration for the speaker's preparation.

🔥 Invite and Prepare Speakers

Speakers are the key to IGNITE-ing the girls. Recruiting good speakers may seem daunting at first, but the process is quite simple if broken into the following steps:

First… Create a list of potential speakers or sources of potential speakers and send letters of explanation and/or invitation.

Brainstorm with your leadership team to create a list of potential candidates or companies to contact. If your team has specific women in mind already, send each one a letter explaining a bit about IGNITE and inviting her to speak. A sample invitation letter [5.1/invite] is included in the Resource section of the IGNITE website. If members of the planning team know any of these individuals personally, it's nice to start with a phone call. A call is especially good if you're quite sure the individual will respond positively. Follow the call with the letter so that the speaker isn't trying to remember details from the phone conversation. If a potential speaker hesitates during the phone call, take a moment to answer any of her questions and see if you can alleviate any of her concerns. If she is still uncertain, ask if you can send a letter and check back with her later.

If you don't have specific women in mind, or need more women, send the letter of explanation and invitation [5.1/spkrID] to human resources or technology department heads of the chosen organizations.

Be creative with your invitations. Look for women in a variety of true technology careers like computer networking or programming, but also look at other jobs that use aspects of technology. Network with people you know who might know women in technology and engineering careers. Talk with friends, relatives, and coworkers; ask them to ask people they know. Consider some of the following places to network for potential speakers:

- School or district offices that employ women managing the information networks.

- Teachers of the business and technical classes of your school.

- Retailers who employ specialists in computerized inventory tracking technology.

- Public sector employees (city/county/government) who manage information systems with technology.

- Television and/or radio production studios with editors or producers who use digital editing equipment.

- Graphic artists and printers who use technology to create print materials.

- Customer service professionals, programmers, or network engineers in high-tech companies.

- Community colleges with a variety of technical and technology-related programs.

- Technology councils and local chapters of organizations such as the Society of Women Engineers, American Association of University Women, Association for Women in Computing, and Graphic Artists Guild.

> **Cathi's Comments**
> *It is important to remind women that all kinds of jobs are welcomed, not just highly technical ones like technology sales or network engineering. Besides jobs that require serious technical skill or understanding, there are many other jobs like technical writing and software testing that are not purely technical yet involve technology in some way.*

Next… Follow up each letter with a phone call.

Follow up introductory letters with a phone call to identify specific women willing to participate as Presentation speakers. For example, you might call the human resources manager at a local high-tech company and say something similar to the following:

> "Good morning. My name is Joan Smith, and I am an IGNITE volunteer. I hope you've had a chance to consider the letter I sent last week explaining IGNITE. [*If the response indicates otherwise, simply say 'I understand. That's not a problem. Could I take a minute to explain the program?' and move ahead with the script.*] IGNITE is an organization dedicated to acquainting middle or high school girls with potential technology career opportunities by introducing them to women successfully working in technology and engineering. We are planning a career presentation for middle or high school girls on April 10th. Are there any women in your organization that you would recommend who could spend about an hour with the girls? We want the girls to hear about what the women do, the unique challenges they faced as a women in technology, and the kinds of education or experiences that led them to choose their job."

If you have not sent an introductory letter and you need to move quickly, a cold call will be necessary. The difference is that this time you know that whoever you're talking to has no previous information about IGNITE.

Once you identify potential speakers, simply call or e-mail the women identified to explain what an IGNITE Presentation is and why you would like them to participate. Use a similar script to ask for participation, adding that a Presentation usually involves three to five speakers, each telling her unique story and then answering questions. Try to invite women from a variety of careers in nontraditional fields like engineering and technology, or in positions that require technology or computer skills.

What if the women I contact say they do not have a story to tell? What if they are nervous about speaking to middle or high school students?

You can ask a few simple questions to help each woman see that she does have a story. You can say something like:

> "Every woman has a story about how she ended up in a technical job. You have a story too, and it would be so great for these young girls if you could share it with them. The girls are really interested in hearing what you do, how you got the job you now have, and the challenges you faced along the way. What would you say was your greatest challenge?"

If they are still reluctant, you might share a few statistics illustrating the lack of women in the fields of technology and engineering. Most women will not be reluctant, though. They live the issues IGNITE addresses. Few of them work with many other women.

If someone continues to express reluctance, listen for the real nature of her discomfort. Assure potential speakers that they will not be speaking alone, but as part of a panel. Let them know there will be a facilitator to help maintain a comfortable environment and that the facilitator will ensure that information flows easily and comfortably, prompting with questions when necessary. Tell them that professional public speaking skills are not necessary, but they do need to be open about the path to their jobs and relating some of the challenges they faced. This is not like delivering a cost justification speech to corporate colleagues. It is simply a sharing of experiences, followed by discussion relevant to the girls' questions.

If anyone is still hesitant (very few will be), offer to let her speak after other women (at least one of your speakers will not mind taking the lead) so she hears someone else and becomes familiar with the format. Be sure to let her know that past speakers who were nervous found the IGNITE Presentation to be a very easy and enjoyable experience. We simply want women to tell their stories.

Finally… Prepare your speakers

Once you have confirmed the speakers, have a short phone discussion to help them identify the particular parts of their story that will be relevant. Give them the time frame for their remarks (approximately ten minutes, depending on the number of other speakers and the amount of time available for the Presentation). If possible, have the confirmed speaker fill out the Volunteer Questionnaire [3.4/ VQ – available on the website] and return it to you well ahead of the actual Presentation date. This

allows you to introduce her ahead of time on your chapter web pages. If a speaker is confirmed but still nervous, it may be wiser to have her fill out the questionnaire once she feels more comfortable. Try to have all questionnaires completed by the Presentation date.

Prepare a list of questions for speakers to use as guidelines in their Presentations. Examples would include: *What did you do in high school? How did you get interested in technology or your job? Were there any challenges you faced because you were a woman?* Mail this list to each speaker after the confirmation phone call. A list of suggested questions [5.1/spkr.prep] is provided on the IGNITE website. A week or two before the Presentation, send a confirmation letter [5.1/conf.info] including directions to the event location and other pertinent information.

When you e-mail the list of questions to nervous speakers, assure them once again that a facilitator will be present to prompt them if they lose their way. Encourage speakers to talk about the different kinds of jobs in their company that might relate to girl's interests or personalities.

Professional people are often invited to speak to students about careers. Many will not be surprised by your invitation. The number of speakers will be determined by your time allotment. Try to schedule enough time for three to five speakers representing a variety of careers and backgrounds. Once you have had your first Presentation, the speakers will connect you to more women they know who might be interested in participating in future events.

> **Cathi's Comments**
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> *In order to create the connections that make IGNITE unique, women should share details about their lives to show that they are real people who have struggled and overcome obstacles similar to those the girls themselves are facing. In Seattle, we've heard women share high school difficulties such as pregnancy, dyslexia, and running away. Every woman has faced some sort of obstacle and overcome it or them in order to achieve her current position. It's the realness of these struggles that creates the connections—the magic—in IGNITE. It's what makes this program different and successful.*

🔥 Invite and Advertise

Every IGNITE event deserves good publicity, but the initial Presentation requires special attention to this step. Publicity is needed both within the school and in the media to increase community awareness and volunteer participation.

In-School

This is the easiest task of all—invite all the girls in your school! There are girls in every stratum of the school population who secretly would like to learn about technology, but have no support for their in-

terest. Other girls do not realize that careers that already interest them may require technology skills. Most 21st century careers involve technology in some way. IGNITE wants to break down barriers for all girls and give strong encouragement to girls who like technology but do not want to be identified as geeks or nerds.

Martha Flores, a former high school student, explains it this way:

> "IGNITE is not just about technology or computers; it is about *making connections*. In IGNITE you introduce yourself to girls you would otherwise never talk to and find out you have a lot in common. Even though we all come from different backgrounds and may not look alike, we are all girls going through the same things. In high school, IGNITE was like a support group. To this day, I keep in touch with girls I met in IGNITE. We take classes together in college now.
>
> I would totally be up for being a mentor now. I could give back a little of what IGNITE has given me. IGNITE is for *everyone*."

Cathi's Comments

While flyers are a great starting point, I would encourage key teachers or other staff to extend personal invitations to all girls in their classes. It's even nice to invite girls that you see strolling through the hallways. Just make an attempt to reach out to all the girls that you see.

Use the template [5.1/flyer] in the Resource section of the IGNITE website to create announcement/invitation flyers. Distribute these to the entire population of girls in the school hosting the Presentation. It is important that all girls have access to IGNITE events, regardless of whether they are perceived to need such a program or not. Also place flyers in all teacher/staff mailboxes; post them in the lunchroom, library, halls, and common spaces; and leave a supply of extras in the front office, career center, and counseling office.

Encourage girls to reserve a seat by signing up ahead of the Presentation. Sign-up lists, usually in the career center or with specific teachers, help ensure that there are enough tables, chairs, food, and passes for girls who linger to talk one-on-one with speakers.

The Media

The smaller your community, the greater your likelihood of getting "positive press" in the various media channels. In larger communities, always keep the major media informed of IGNITE events and success stories, but also seek out smaller publicity venues such as neighborhood organizations, school and corporate newsletters, and local storefront windows.

The Resource section of the IGNITE website includes a press release template [2.6/press]. Use this to announce the formation of your chapter, to advertise upcoming events, to report event successes, especially after the first Presentation, and—with the girls' permission [2.6/stu.release]—to share individual success stories. When used properly, the media can be both a significant support and an effective promotional tool.

🔥 Create a Safe Environment

We all know how important first impressions can be. It is critical that the girls' first impression of IGNITE be one of order and comfort. This can be achieved with careful planning, anticipation of possible exigencies, and the calm demeanor and welcoming attitude of those in charge. The following considerations will help ensure the safe and inviting atmosphere you desire.

- Before your speakers arrive, check all equipment to see that it is properly placed and in good working order. Also be sure someone is present who knows how to operate *all* the equipment you have secured (microphones, overhead projectors, PowerPoint presentations, VCRs and monitors, LCD projectors, etc.). If necessary, learn to operate the equipment yourself. Practice ahead of time, and carry an instruction cheat sheet that provides quick and easy reference. Though the occasional glitch is bound to happen, it is imperative that every effort be made to prevent this. *"Waiting for power" disrupts the connection between women and girls, and repeated disruptions will seriously diminish the success of the Presentation.*

> **Cathi's Comments**
> *Custodial staff are not always available for set up, especially during lunch. Often the girls have helped me set up. It's fun and I always put them first in the food line as a reward.*

- Seat the speakers as a panel, using one or more tables depending on the number of women participating. Please ask the speakers to stand while they talk because it's easier for the girls to see them. For the speakers' comfort, bring bottles of water and leave them within easy reach.

- Students will be most comfortable if they can also sit at tables. Tables encourage note taking and are especially important if food is served.

- If the Presentation takes place outside a classroom, be sure to provide overhead projectors, white boards, or newsprint roll so speakers can share their names and contact information.

- Be prepared with about 30 percent more chairs than you think you will need. Frequently, many more girls show up than are signed up.

- Ask speakers to arrive early enough that you can personally meet each one, or arrange for volunteers to welcome the women and escort each one to the Presentation location. Allow sufficient time for speakers to sign in as building guests, ask if they need the restroom, and then escort them to the proper room. Ideally, the speakers should have time to meet each other, get comfortable in the space, and chat a bit before the girls arrive. This informal chat gives presenters an opportunity to relax and network with each other.

- Remember that many of your speakers have not been in a middle or high school environment since they were students themselves. Times have changed. Do what you can to ensure their comfort.

- If you plan a Presentation that includes lunch, order considerably more food than you think you will need. Include in your counts all participating teachers, volunteers, speakers, and guests. When you have this total, order 30 percent more for unexpected attendees. You do not want to turn away any interested girl just because she didn't get her forms in on time, and you do not want to send anyone away hungry.

- If possible, prepare the girls for the Presentation experience beforehand. Help them understand how special the time together with the women can be. Encourage their active participation so they can get the most out of this opportunity.

The Resource section of the IGNITE website has a Presentation checklist [5.1/Pchk] you can use to keep track of these considerations. See Section 5.2 for details regarding management of the actual Presentation event.

5.2

"There is something special about sharing my story with the young women. It was also gratifying to see the noticeable changes in their posture and interest level as they realized the possibilities for their future."

— Charmell Slaughter
Personal Development Facilitator
East Coast Regional Coordinator, IGNITE U.S.

Hosting the Presentation

As the IGNITE chapter coordinator/facilitator, you wear many hats on Presentation day. You will be teacher, mentor, timekeeper, host, and hospitality chair. You are welcoming both the speakers and students. Try to be well rested so that you come to the Presentation full of energy and ready to devote your full attention to ensuring that everyone is comfortable and well accommodated. The ability to create and maintain a safe, welcoming, inviting space through effective, invisible time management will serve both the speakers and students well.

🔥 Timing is Everything

The facilitator for Presentation events needs to understand that her job is to create a safe space for both speakers and students. Her role in managing time during a Presentation is critical to the success of the event. The facilitator must allow for the initial chaos of students released from their normal routine so she can begin the Presentation on time. The facilitator also keeps the speakers on track, ensuring adequate time for a question and answer period and for students to fill out evaluations. *Evaluations are so important that providing rewards (treats) for returning completed forms is advised.*

Each speaker will generally have ten minutes to tell her story. It is advisable to let all presenters speak before opening the floor for questions. This ensures that each woman will have adequate time to share her prepared remarks. The facilitator should explain this process in the introductory remarks. Ask students to write down their questions and hold them for the question and answer period at the end. Since girls may not have their backpacks, it is good to have paper on the tables where they are seated or, if tables aren't available, to give each girl a sheet of paper as she enters.

Some situations may justify allowing questions after each speaker's story, especially if the Presentation takes place during lunch periods or other extended time. An even more effective system, when time allows, is to allow a few speaker-specific questions after each presenter. Generic questions (those that can be answered by any or all presenters) are held until the end. Whichever approach is used, the facilitator is responsible for managing the time so that all presenters have an opportunity to tell their stories.

🔥 Preliminaries and Introductions

Make sure to have people stationed at all entrances to the Presentation venue to greet girls and distribute any/all of the following as needed: paper (for notes and questions), the One-Sheet Welcome [5.2/1-sheet], and Presentation Evaluation forms [5.2/Peval]. Prior to the event, the facilitator should also print and read the Facilitator Information & Reminders sheet [5.2/facil], keeping it with her at the Presentation if necessary.

At the beginning of the Presentation, the chapter coordinator and/or facilitator introduces the IGNITE concept, explaining its philosophy and goals and the purpose of the Presentation event. If there is time, use the IGNITE video as part of the introduction. The introduction sets the stage for the presenters who follow. Adjust the following script to fit your needs.

Good morning. My name is Jane Smith and I am the IGNITE chapter coordinator and facilitator for today's event. Thank you all for coming to this IGNITE presentation. IGNITE stands for Inspiring Girls Now In Technology Evolution.

- Can you tell me why we are all women here today to talk about careers in technology and engineering? (*Let the girls answer these questions—they will know the answers.*)

- What are some careers that are traditional careers for women? (*Write responses on whiteboard, chalkboard, or easel paper.*)

- What are some traditional careers for men? (*Record responses.*)

A "nontraditional career" has fewer than 25 percent of a specified gender represented in that job, so *. . .*

- What do you think are some nontraditional careers for men?

- What do you think are some nontraditional careers for women? (*Technology-related careers are usually mentioned here.*)

Lots of us know women who are teachers, receptionists, or bookkeepers, but how many of you know women who are engineers? (*Allow for responses, acknowledging the luck of those who might know someone working in one of these nontraditional careers.*) Women who work in technology? (*Responses.*) Women who are computer programmers? (*Responses.*)

Since many of you don't know women who work in these often high-paying, interesting jobs, we have invited a few here today to meet with you. Here on this panel are women who work in nontraditional, technology-oriented jobs. They are here to tell their stories about how they got these jobs, what they like about their jobs, and some of the challenges they faced getting the jobs.

Introduce the first speaker and then each speaker in turn.

🔥 Fielding Questions

As mentioned previously, the facilitator is responsible for keeping speakers on track so that there is ample time for a question and answer discussion. She should clearly set the expectations for both speakers and students regarding questions in her introductory remarks. It is often necessary, especially in early Presentations, or any Presentation lasting only an hour, to hold questions until all the presenters have spoken. With more time and/or a more seasoned facilitator, questions can be addressed after each speaker and at the end of the Presentation. To make this multiple discussion format most effective, tell girls to save generic questions like "What technology skills would you say are "must have" items on a resume?" for the end, and ask only speaker-specific questions like "How sympathetic were instructors to the fact that you were still learning English while you were in the web design class?" during the shorter Q&A sessions. No matter which format is used, be prepared to provide the girls with paper to jot down questions so they will remember them.

To encourage questions at the end, the facilitator should have token treats, like wrapped candy, on hand to give (or throw for more fun) to those brave enough to ask initial questions. This reward system quickly eliminates shyness and sparks many great questions and exciting dialogue.

🔥 Final Thoughts on Facilitating

Society uses the term facilitator a lot, and sometimes without much thought as to its real meaning. Often a facilitator is just another person leading us through another meeting. It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of the facilitator's role in an IGNITE Presentation event. She must truly facilitate—that is, she must make it easy for girls to understand and connect to the presenters. If there is one girl in the room who doesn't understand what these women are saying, her experience will be less than it should be. If any speaker loses the girls' attention, the whole event can become a disaster. Each Presentation is another "moment" we've been waiting and preparing for, the moment the magic begins—but there can be no magic, no connections, if the girls don't understand what these very smart, very technical women are saying.

So how does a skilled facilitator ensure understanding? First, she tells speakers ahead of time that she will politely interrupt when she knows the girls aren't following them or when she feels an idea needs more explanation. She becomes a highlighting pen in an oral textbook. When a speaker shares a really valuable piece of information, the facilitator will stop her and say, "You know, girls… what we just heard is really important. What did you hear Mary say?" She elicits one or two correct responses, amplifies them briefly if necessary, and sits down. If the presenter talks about things the facilitator knows the girls don't under-

stand—certifications, for example—she stops her and asks her to explain. The facilitator's job is to listen from the perspective of a teenage girl and then clarify or reiterate as needed.

The other really important job of the facilitator is to help the girls connect with the speakers. A good facilitator can tell when this is happening, and a great facilitator can accelerate the process by inserting appropriate questions and comments at the right times. Too many interruptions and the flow of the Presentation is lost; not enough, and the girls are lost. Facilitating is part science, part intuition, and when it's done right the magic is palpable.

🔥 Wrapping Up

Evaluations

Pass out evaluation forms at the beginning of the Presentation, letting girls know these must be completed prior to leaving that day. Explain the importance of evaluations as a way to let presenters know how they have influenced students' thinking and also to improve Presentations in the future. As you start the evaluation time, encourage the girls to use complete sentences on the forms and let them know that the presenters will be reading them. Use bribery to ensure forms are filled out and returned. Post volunteers at the door to hand out treats as girls return the evaluations.

Closing Remarks

Thank the speakers**.** Introduce teachers in your school's business and technology departments and/or career center specialists, who then briefly tell girls what classes or programs are currently available. Tell students of any upcoming IGNITE events and give them the IGNITE Worldwide web address. Have passes ready for students who linger to talk with speakers, teachers, or counselors.

Dismissal

Dismiss students after the evaluation forms are complete and collected. Be aware that many girls will want to meet the speakers. Have passes ready for these students so they are not frustrated by the need to get to their next class at the same time they desire to make a personal connection with the speakers.

🔥 Special Issues: Lunchtime Presentations

- When serving lunch as part of a Presentation event, set clear expectations with the girls. Tell them in advance, on the flyer, and on the sign-up sheet, that they are expected to stay for the entire program, not just for lunch.

- Repeat this expectation during the introductory remarks: students are to remain for the entire event. An IGNITE Presentation is not just a free lunch. Be kind and understanding, but firm.

- Help students understand that they have to make a choice if a conflict prevents them from staying for the whole event. This is an opportunity for decision-making skill building.

- Use discretion regarding turning a student away. IGNITE policy is to never discourage a student from getting this vital information; trust your instincts regarding individual students in your care.

- Err on the side of feeding a disinterested body in hopes of feeding a student on a deeper level with the Presentation. However, if a student has a history of manipulative behavior, use your judgment regarding the wisdom of letting her stay if she is not available for the whole Presentation.

- While it is not necessary to invest yourself in the impact of the Presentation on each individual, do not let uninterested students who drop in only to get a free lunch disrupt the Presentation. Have realistic expectations; these girls are teenagers.

- Carefully plan for an orderly, efficient lunch line to get girls served and seated quickly.

- Understand both the limitations and opportunities of the space you have; provide ample napkins and garbage cans.

- Have a plan for spills (teenagers + food = spills).

- Allow adequate time for getting food and settling down. You need not wait until everyone has finished eating before the Presentation begins. Use your discretion based on the number of speakers and total time available.

- Have volunteers assist in providing directions regarding food as the girls arrive; request that students refrain from getting seconds until everyone has had an opportunity to get their lunch. *Do* invite the girls to get up as needed to get seconds or drinks after all are fed. Try to keep the atmosphere informal and relaxed.

- Understand that the mere presence of food can present its own set of unexpected challenges. Fortunately, the additional time provided during the lunch period usually compensates for any difficulties that arise.

"It is the reactions of the girls and their families that keeps me committed to IGNITE. The feedback from the girls is very insightful."

— Carola Dopps
Counselor & Educational Consultant

Presentation Follow-Up

Like Cathi's reaction ("Well, that worked.") after the very first Presentation, it's easy to heave a sigh of relief and exhilaration after the presenters and girls have dispersed. But the work isn't quite finished yet.

🔥 Thank Yous and the Event Report

Cathi's Comments
Though they may take a little prodding at first, the power of personal, handwritten thank yous cannot be overestimated. These notes become part of the glue that holds the vast IGNITE network together.

Because IGNITE depends on collaborative efforts, thank yous are more than good manners, they are important tools for relationship building. Thank the people from industry, the school, and the volunteer pool—everyone who contributed to the success of the Presentation. Each thank you should include comments from the girls' evaluations and specifics about the contributions of the individual. Be sure to thank teachers; they bring valuable experience and perspective to the program and generate great ideas.

Thank yous are always part of the Presentation report, but can also be sent via e-mail through your listserve or, for maximum positive impact, be handwritten and sent by one or more of the girls. Presenters often hold onto thank yous for years afterwards, and the girls also find their connections to the women strengthened through the notes.

Consider Alice Yeh's experience:

> "After the event, I wrote thank you cards to each of the presenters. Years later, as a freshman at MIT, I was looking for a summer internship. I contacted one of the presenters, Joni Blakeslee, who still remembered me from the thank you I had sent, and I have kept in touch with her ever since."

After each event, a report [5.3/rpt] must be written and posted on the chapter web pages at www.ignite-us.org. The thank yous are the heart of this report. Reports need not be lengthy, but they should include both the specific highlights and perceived weaknesses or challenges of the Presentation. Do not, however, reveal any personal information about presenters or girls. When referring to students, always protect their privacy by using only first names.

File reports by posting them on your IGNITE chapter web pages. If you have digital photographs from your event, please include them with your report. (Remember to keep a signed photo release [2.6/stu.release] for each girl on file and send a copy to IGNITE Worldwide.) Also encourage the girls, mentors, speakers, and volunteers to write their own reflections on the experience and post those as well.

As part of your evaluation form, invite girls to participate in a student list-serve on your chapter's web pages. Have those who would like to participate provide e-mail addresses through which you can send notices of upcoming IGNITE events and distribute other appropriate resource information regarding scholarships, grants, college information, internships, job shadows, and such.

🔥 Planning Team Evaluation

As soon as possible after the Presentation, schedule a meeting with key planners to review what went well and what could have gone better. One way to improve your success is to review the planning *process*, connecting those steps to the strengths and weaknesses of the actual Presentation. Which planning decisions improved the Presentation? Did gaps in preparation lead to problems? What (if any) specific changes in planning do you need to make to improve the next Presentation, or were the glitches truly the result of circumstances beyond your control? Keep good notes of this meeting for future reference.

> ### Cathi's Comments
> *I can't say enough times how critical these reports are to the success of IGNITE. Reading the girls' comments really brings the impact of the presentation home to the presenters. Writing and posting each report is a pivotal component of the total IGNITE program. Say thank you to everyone, individually, including their job title and a few words about their specific contribution. Make a fuss; they deserve it. Everyone who plays a part, regardless of how small, is acknowledged. After the thank yous, copy the girls' sentences from the evaluation forms. Everyone appreciates the feedback and feels an even greater connection after reading these comments.*

🔥 Section 6

Other Events

"Cultivating a passion has an impact on kids' lives. They come to think that having interesting occupations is a possibility for themselves, not just for other people."

— Deborah Meier
Educational Reformer, Writer, and Activist

"I can't say enough about my job shadowing experiences. The mentors want to see you succeed. They tell you what they did, the courses they took in college, and some of their mistakes or shortcuts. That way, you know what to, and not to do."

— Kelly Elston
Student

Corporate Collaboration

Once girls have experienced their first Presentation event, they will be eager for more information and more contacts with these and similar women. The events and activities below have been effective means of providing both of these.

🔥 Field Trips

Field trips come in many varieties. Ideas for field trips are limited only by your own creativity. Plan a day exploring industry (technology companies or other organizations incorporating some level of technology), community colleges, technical colleges, or universities. Keep in mind that girls want to meet women, so try to find organizations with interested women as well as something to see.

Volunteers at the field trip location should collaborate with educators for planning activities, tours, and lunch. Collaboration between the sponsoring agency planner and chapter field trip coordinator is vital for a fun, successful and educational day. Time for field trips is often limited by the school bus schedule. Chartering a private bus is expensive, but certainly allows more time and therefore more opportunities.

Set a specific goal for each field trip. What do you want the girls to learn or see? IGNITE girls in the Seattle area have taken field trips to engineering labs at technical colleges, to the University of Washington robotics lab, Cisco Systems server rooms, and to Microsoft's Home and Office of the Future and Access Technology Labs where researchers create technology to accommodate persons with disabilities. Goals for these trips might be learning the different types of engineering, building a working robot out of Legos, understanding exactly what servers are and do, and seeing/using prototype technology that demonstrate the amazing potential for the future.

Field trips must be highly structured. A general format that works well looks something like this:

- 45 min tour and/or activity

- Lunch with as many women from the company as possible

- During lunch, roundtable discussions (formal or informal) to encourage interaction with the students—have girls come prepared with questions

- As lunch winds down, formal story sharing by women (similar to the Presentation model discussed in Section 5)

Take home goody bags or gifts from the company are always a nice treat for the girls. Ask your corporate IGNITE partner to check with the marketing department to see what might be available.

Important: Don't forget the evaluation forms [6.1/FTeval]. A good time to distribute these is while the girls are still seated and just before the goody bags are handed out. Make sure the girls complete these and turn them in before heading toward the buses. Also remember to keep some wrapped candy ready to give each girl as she turns in her form. This might also be a good time to leave some IGNITE brochures for distribution throughout the host company.

Fields trips should be highly-structured, high-energy fun. Leaders and chaperones need to be genuinely enthused and fully informed of both the day's activities and the expectations for students and themselves. A field trip checklist form [6.1/FTchk] and a sample handout of student expectations [6.1/FTprep] are found in the Resource section of the IGNITE website.

who work there. We also tell them again of the importance of asking their own questions and suggest that—if they haven't prepared questions—this would be a good time to think of some as we walk toward the designated lunch spot.

The girls and corporate women eat and chat informally in groups of 6 to 8. After lunch, a few women will tell their personal stories just as they would do in a Presentation event at the school. By this time, many of the girls have already "connected," so we as leaders don't have to be the enthusiasm generators anymore. Invariably, when the afternoon panel is finished, the girls are amazed that all the time is already gone. A good indicator of a successful field trip is energized conversation on the bus ride home.

🔥 Conferences

One- or two-day conferences are time intensive and require a strong relationship between the IGNITE chapter and the hosting organization. Conferences also require a great deal of work on the part of the host. The extra effort is worthwhile, however, because the event offers more opportunities for speakers or workshops specifically suited to the needs of the participating chapter.

Conferences differ from field trips in several ways. First, they are much larger than field trips and offer broader possibilities. You can usually expect 100+ girls versus the 20 to 40 for a field trip. If held at a corporate facility, the event focuses on the tech opportunities at that company. Other venues, such as community colleges, are good when the emphasis is on technology-related careers in non-tech industries, such as medicine or the arts, or simply on the range of technology skills and training available.

Conferences may also have themes and always include a variety of workshops. Themes from past events include athletes and technology, technology in the home, technology in medicine, technology in the arts, or robotics. Workshops are based on the theme, if there is one, and should always be topics of interest to the girls. Previous workshops have included interior design, glass blowing, architecture, graphic arts and videos, music mixing and layering, math as language, and metallurgy for jewelry making. The possibilities are endless.

The general format for a conference schedule is as follows:

Day 1

- Arrival, registration, and welcome
- Breakout session—girls choose one of several, such as *Best Kept Secret: You don't need to be an engineer to work in IT!, How to Get the Job You Want, Athletes in Technology, Resume and Cover Letters, or Power Networking*
- Lunch (with presentations on topics such as internships, technology camps, and interview attire)
- Activities or tours

Day 2

Job shadowing

🔥 Special Considerations

Taking girls outside the school entails a whole new set of responsibilities and liabilities. Here are some of the more important ones to consider:

- Check with the human resources or legal department of the corporation to see if there are non-disclosure forms to sign or other regulatory or security requirements for guests on the host's campus.

- Remind the corporate liaison to consider special dietary needs when planning lunch. Vegetarian alternatives should always be available, and foods such as peanuts that cause serious allergic reaction should be avoided. Also alert her to any students requiring special services such as an ASL interpreter.

- Use school contacts to order buses with the realization that your time frame for events will be limited by the school district bus schedule.

- Remember that more lead time for planning is required for larger and more complicated events such as these.

- Usually industry wants the list of adults and students one week before the trip is scheduled. They need to know how much food to order and sometimes they need to inform security or make name badges. It is a good idea to check protocol with your industry contact.

> **Cathi's Comments**
>
> *Every minute of these events, even bathroom breaks, must be carefully planned. The worst thing you can do on a field trip or conference is to allow down time. You want everything structured so that kids go from one activity to another without a moment to waste.*
>
> *If this is done, the girls won't get bored; they won't be wandering, looking for clocks, or whispering when they should be listening. When the event is over you'll hear "Ohhh, it's over? But it went so fast." That's the signal that you've planned well.*

A good way to encourage girls to attend a field trip is to schedule a Presentation at your school about two weeks before the planned trip. Announce the field trip at the end of the Presentation. Interested girls get a packet of information to read, along with permission forms and participation expectations. The packet primes girls with questions to ask while they are on the field trip.

🔥 Job Shadowing

Like conferences, job shadowing days require a lot of planning. Corporate mentors need to be identified and paired with girls who have similar interests or career aspirations. Girls need to understand that, unlike real shadows, they will be active participants in the experience and therefore need to arrive prepared. Chapter coordinators manage the logistics of preparation, transportation, and follow-up, as well as teacher concerns over students missing an entire day of classes.

> **Cathi's Comments**
>
> *I've found the best way to alleviate the concerns of mentors who are willing but nervous is to offer a teleconference a day or two before the job shadow. Get the host company to set up the conference call so everyone hears everyone else's concerns and you don't have to continually repeat information. It's also helpful to include, if possible, someone who has mentored a job shadow before. Nothing allays fears like a "voice of experience."*

Theoretically, job shadow mentors simply have students tag along with them on a normal workday, answering questions along the way. If you can answer questions, you can host a student for a job shadow. Theoretically. The fact is that many mentors, while eager to participate, may be nervous about the actual interaction. This is especially true for mentors who have not spent much time with teenagers. The good thing about recruiting corporate mentors is that job shadows always occur after a Presentation event, so they already might have a taste of what to expect.

Job shadowing provides girls with an opportunity to observe people in jobs that the girls think they may like. No matter how uninteresting workers think their meeting filled day might be, students are fascinated by what goes on in any daily routine. Students love being able to sit in on meetings, planning sessions, and all the day-to-day interactions of professional colleagues. While it would be ideal for girls to spend an entire day with their job shadow mentor, the timeframe again is usually limited by the district bus schedule. Still, the few hours a job shadow mentor gives can change girls' lives.

Job shadowing opportunities develop after a chapter forms strong relationships with organizations that have provided Presentation speakers. Job shadow mentors are identified through interactions with the speakers, and through networking and collaboration done by the IGNITE chapter. Job shadow mentors can be women or men. While it is preferable to have women, the reality is that there are not enough women in technology jobs to provide a one-on-one job shadowing experience for each IGNITE girl who desires one. In this situation, the job shadow experience itself is more important than the girl-to-woman connection.

Job shadows are a favorite event of the girls. They are also a challenge and one of the most difficult events for chapters to plan. School-based chapters require a committed corporate partner willing to identify an adequate number of corporate volunteers to pair with interested students. While job shadowing can be done with a large number of girls, it is probably more effective if done in groups of twenty or less.

The following steps outline the basic preparation for a job shadow activity:

- Prepare sign-up forms for the girls and for potential volunteers at the hosting corporation.

- Have girls complete job shadow interest forms [6.2/jsh.stu] that include their top three career interests.

- Have the corporate liaison distribute and collect job description forms [6.1/jsh.corp] from potential volunteers.

- Match girls' interests to available volunteers.

- Arrange transportation for the agreed upon date and time.

- Apprise girls of realistic expectations, both what is expected of them and what they can expect to do/learn through the experience. See that each girl has a Job Shadow Packet [6.1/jsh.pkt], which includes extensive preparation information, a sample thank you letter, a job shadow report, and a Student Evaluation [6.1/jsh.steval] for the mentor to complete.

- Keep channels of communication open between the corporate planner, the chapter or activity coordinator, and the school staff.

Pre-planning is the key to successful job shadowing. Once the students are on-site, the event is easy to execute. Once introduced to each other, students simply shadow their mentors and pepper them with questions. At the end of the day, each girl leaves a Student Evaluation [6.1/jsh.steval] with her mentor, who completes the form and returns it to the corporate job shadow coordinator. Asking students to write or speak about their experiences afterward also helps them fully integrate the experience.

Teachers can also participate in corporate job shadowing during summer and winter breaks. Sometimes "clock hours" are even available for these experiences. Providing teachers with job shadowing opportunities in technology helps keep them abreast of industry changes as they plan lessons for their students.

While the process sounds simple, preparation for a successful job shadowing event is quite labor intensive and requires excellent collaborative efforts between the IGNITE coordinator, the school, and the sponsoring company. However, this activity is always worth the effort. Job shadows have been pivotal experiences for many IGNITE girls.

🔥 Internships

Internships are also significant, even life changing, experiences for girls, and valuable relationship building opportunities with companies. Girls who intern get training, learn about workplace expectations, and often can earn a salary. IGNITE girls who interned at Microsoft during high school were inspired by the experience: some girls chose technology programs in college; others found jobs at Microsoft after college graduation. Microsoft also benefits by connecting with motivated, hard working students who often return to become successful employees. It is a win-win situation for everyone.

IGNITE chapter coordinators can use the connections made while planning and executing Presentations to uncover summer internship opportunities. IGNITE volunteers can facilitate the process for girls seeking internships within their corporations. Volunteers within the schools can talk to Presentation speakers, suggesting that they network with colleagues or through professional associations to identify other internship possibilities.

IGNITE coordinators give girls a list of available summer internships. Information about these internships comes from a variety of sources: the high school career center, community colleges, local colleges and universities, large corporations, and the corporate women you invite to speak at Presentations. Internships and other opportunities are also posted at ignite-us.org. IGNITE mentors can help girls fill out the applications, providing much needed support so girls feel confident about securing their desired positions. IGNITE speakers and mentors have made introductions at their organizations, worked with their human resource department to develop new opportunities for internships, and advised the girls on work etiquette and protocols that ensure their success.

IGNITE facilitates the connection for internships, but once the girls begin working, their primary relationship shifts to the hiring company. When IGNITE girls return to their schools in the fall, they are asked to share their internship experience during an IGNITE event.

🔥 Mentoring

Most mentoring relationships grow naturally out of IGNITE events. Presentation speakers are often impressed by the determination of the girls, responding to them with great compassion. Sometimes relationships develop almost immediately when students are inspired by specific women and make purposeful connections with them after an event. Later, girls contact the women, usually by e-mail, asking for advice and guidance with their studies and or career choices, and from this the mentoring

relationships blossom. The two quotes below indicate that both students and mentors have found the mentoring relationship very rewarding.

"Candy and I met after hours where I worked at Cisco, and I taught her about networks. I was also able to offer her business and career advice, helping her make decisions about what she wanted to do with her life. Eventually, Candy got her Cisco Certified Network Administration certification, then went on to internship with Microsoft and was offered full time work at Microsoft before she even graduated from college.

"Time and time again, IGNITE has given me the opportunity to reach out to girls who are struggling. I have learned we are all here to help each other—if we just offer a hand, we can really make a difference."

—"Mo" Rozenhart

"One of my mentors, Justine, has been very inspirational. She has provided a lot of guidance in my life and career. I met her in high school and we have kept in touch since then. She helped just before college graduation when I was having a really rough time trying to decide what company to work for. It is really great to have a mentor like this.

"Now that I have my degree and my first job, I plan on staying actively involved with IGNITE. Perhaps one day I'll mentor a high school girl and give back some of what Justine gave to me."

—Vicky Ho

🔥 IGNITE Unites

IGNITE offers the "IGNITE Unites" program for mentors who prefer to "adopt" a class, a group of classes (e.g. Ms. Brown's three computer classes), or a department with the goal of providing updated tech information, student support, hands-on project ideas, or some other relevant and specific contribution. The nature of the contribution is determined by the mentor and teacher(s) together. IGNITE Unites mentors are required to visit their adopted class(es) at least twice per semester and are encouraged to visit more if at all possible. Handout [6.1/unite] states the guidelines and goals of IGNITE Unites and explains each mentor's responsibilities. While the handout is intended for those who have already indicated that they would like to participate in this particular program, it also makes a good cheat sheet for anyone explaining IGNITE Unites.

"Another one of my favorite things was the poster contest. I tried to put what I had experienced through IGNITE in both pictures and words – and I won!"

— *Candy Chiang*
Student

Non-Corporate Activities

Just like people, IGNITE chapters reflect a variety of growth patterns. After the first Presentation event, some chapters move right on to corporate field trips. Others may host several Presentations before branching out, and then may choose to hold workshops at a local college or plan a Saturday College and Scholarship Day. The events explained below have proven successful for many IGNITE chapters. As your chapter develops new activities of its own and posts reports on your web pages, this list will grow.

College Visits

While Microsoft and other technology destinations are always popular, it is also important to include colleges, universities, and trade schools in the field trip list. These institutions are the next step for most IGNITE girls, many of whom may be the first in their families to attend college, so these visits help facilitate the transition process.

Collaborate with the admissions or technical/math/engineering departments. If possible, college field trips should include some sort of technology-related activity or tour of the computer center or other unique technological feature of the school. Women students and professors should be available to talk about engineering and/or technical programs at the school. Arrange to have career and admissions counselors on hand to explain the prerequisites for these programs, so girls understand what technical certifications or high school courses they may need.

Be sure to provide an opportunity for girls to receive application and scholarship information. Remember, many of these girls have never been on a college campus before. The campus visit allows these students to become familiar with the overall environment, to interact with both students and staff, and to gain insight and information vital to future decisions.

Target junior and senior girls for participation in a college or technical school field trip. Ask technical colleges to create a "girls day" to promote programs that typically have low female enrollment. This will not only appeal to the girls who visit but also encourage enrollment in the school's programs—another win-win collaboration.

Reminders

When planning any type of out-of-school trip, remember to allow plenty of lead time—these events are much more complex than a Presentation. Also remember *not* to allow any down time. Boredom sets in quickly, so structured activities need to be planned for the entire time on campus. For specific suggestions of how to avoid down time, see "Cathi's Comments" on page 119. Also, field trip forms 6.1/FTchk, 6.1/FTprep, and 6.1/FTeval can easily be adapted for use with college visits.

🔥 Seminars and Workshops

Simple seminars and workshops can be set up after school, on a Saturday, or during school breaks at a community college or other convenient location (for a small seminar, a public library conference room might suffice). Local technology gurus are often willing to speak for an hour or two about topics in their areas of expertise. These events frequently require minimal expense since many speakers do not charge fees to school-based clubs.

Whereas a seminar usually involves just a speaker and some large and/or small group discussion, workshops generally include a hands-on activity. When choosing a workshop location, make sure it provides the proper technology for the activity portion. Workshop topics are limited only by your own imagination. At one community college, for example, the girls were introduced to civil engineering by designing and building Popsicle stick bridges. In another workshop, the girls ventured into materials science, specifically the chemistry of glass, by making glass beads. Other seminar and workshop ideas include the following:

- Creating a web page

- Financial literacy

- Creating flash animation sites

- Getting an email address

- Graphic arts

- Computer-aided interior design

- Computer-aided landscape design

- Applying to college

- Technology in medicine

- Media and technology

> **Cathi's Comments**
> *Most high schools have some sort of career fair during the school year. IGNITE chapters usually do not set up traditional career fairs, but work collaboratively with school career centers, gently reminding organizers that women in nontraditional jobs need to be adequately represented. We also find speakers for these events. IGNITE is a valuable resource in this way.*

One final thought regarding workshops, seminars, and other non-Presentation events. Tech experts abound. When recruiting speakers for these activities, choose individuals who not only know their stuff, but can also deliver that stuff in a teen-friendly manner. Speakers should be relaxed, but in con-

trol, aware and accepting of the participants' range of technologic skill, and always respectful—girls should never feel they are being talked down to or patronized.

🔥 College and Scholarship Day

IGNITE chapters have facilitated Saturday workshops for juniors and seniors to learn about scholarship opportunities and receive help filling out college applications and forms for financial aid and scholarships. For students who are the first in their family to go to college, the process can be quite daunting and overwhelming. During these events, IGNITE has provided support, information, and access to resources that many students simply are not aware of.

After a short informational presentation, girls fill out the various applications and forms under the watchful attention of IGNITE volunteers. This support can be especially valuable as girls plan and draft the personal essays now common on college applications.

Saturdays work well for these events because there is enough time to fill out all the required forms and applications. If possible, have representatives from local colleges or universities available to answer questions and assist as needed. College-age IGNITE volunteers are also often interested in helping with this event and provide excellent examples of what the younger girls can look forward to.

Plan this event for the fall so that senior students can meet deadlines for applications. Invite parents to come for an hour or two to learn about FAFSA, the federal application for financial aid required for all students seeking grants and/or other financial aid (and sometimes for scholarships as well). FAFSA forms can be submitted as early as January of the year the student will begin college. The earlier the FAFSA is submitted, the greater the opportunity for available money.

🔥 Technology Competitions

Technology competitions encourage close collaboration with interested corporations or technology teachers in your school or community to create a fun experience that teaches students marketable skills under the guidance of knowledgeable and experienced leaders. Girls generally work in groups, learning the value of collaboration and teamwork within the real-world dynamic of competition. Possible goals of such a competition might be building a Lego robot, creating a themed computer game, or creating product advertising using Flash or other multimedia.

Students usually create a project in teams, present their work before a panel of judges, and win bragging rights or small prizes. What all participants really win is a sense of accomplishment, the satisfaction that comes from working as a team, and an exciting experience that frequently opens new avenues of possibility.

IGNITE girls who enjoy this type of activity should also be encouraged to enter any of the national technology competitions currently available.

🔥 Summer Camp

Collaboration with major technology companies has provided IGNITE girls access to a number of technology summer camps. Microsoft's DigiGirlz, for example, provides a week's worth of fun, education, and interesting hands-on experiences in a day camp setting. Activities include game testing, studio broadcasting, and product development and marketing. Girls learn that technology jobs are both cool and fun.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology also runs a summer camp for girls, as do many other colleges and universities. Check out your local community or do an Internet search for "girls technology summer camps" to find more information on national programs. Better yet, find a local collaborative partner and design your own camp experiences. Then post your success on the chapter web page so IGNITE girls everywhere can be inspired.

🔥 After-School Programs and Clubs

Starting a club or after-school program creates more opportunities for girls with nontraditional interests and/or career aspirations to meet and interact. Besides providing speakers and activities, clubs and other after-school programs are safe, positive places for girls to gather and talk with each other and with adult volunteers who, when asked, can offer a listening ear, timely advice, or homework help. In this type of supportive environment, girls are soon encouraging each other to stay on the path to success.

Girls involved in after-school clubs often come up with new ideas for IGNITE events, which makes them a valuable chapter resource. Also, having a support network for girls to talk about current issues and concerns is nice added benefit of an IGNITE chapter. Many young women have expressed a need for an after school IGNITE support group. We encourage IGNITE chapters to do this for their girls.

🔥 Mentors and "IGNITE Unites"

Some of the women you meet on college visits or who lead workshops, seminars, or after-school programs may also be interested in mentoring. If they want to work with individual girls, you can suggest they participate in a job shadow or offer an internship, both of which lead naturally into a one-on-one mentoring situation. If they would prefer to work with a particular teacher and her classes, visiting and contributing at least twice each semester, explain the IGNITE Unites program. More details on both of these opportunities are found toward the end of Section 6.1.

🔥 Year-end Ceremonies and Awards

After a year of hard work, it is always fun to have some sort of year-end meeting that celebrates chapter successes and the successes of the individual girls who have participated. Formal ceremonies to send seniors off to college and/or into the world are appropriate, as are acknowledgements of other accomplishments of chapter members (girls, mentors, and volunteers). Celebrating success reminds volunteers why they work so hard to inspire girls to become all that they can be.

Year-end ceremonies can be modeled on the sports awards banquets common to most schools. Parents and students enjoy celebrating the girls' achievements. At an awards night, recognize girls who completed job shadows or internships, girls who earned certifications or received college acceptance, and girls who found rewarding jobs. Give each girl a couple minutes to share the highlights of her experience or award. Be sure to invite mentors—not only do they love to revel in the success of their "girls," but seeing the girls succeed increases their own commitment to IGNITE.

🔥 Section 7

The Women of IGNITE

"How important it is for us to recognize and celebrate our heroes and she-roes!"

— Maya Angelou
Poet and Writer

🔥 Alice Yeh

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Class of 2009
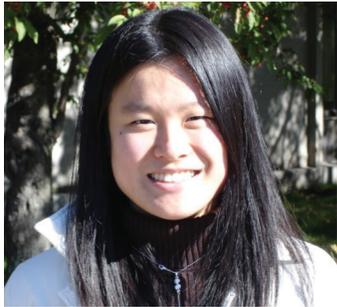
Alice Yeh

"My advice to others is to pursue your passion, whether it lies in high-tech or not. Don't let other people's accomplishments intimidate you, because you are the architect of your dream. Never stop learning, because there is always something you don't know."

I became involved with IGNITE because I was inspired by the professional women I met as a freshman in high school. It was fascinating to hear their life stories. Everyone came from such a different background, and yet they all shared the same qualities of persistence, dedication, and passion. As I navigate my college years and eventually my own career path, I hope to follow in their footsteps and do something spectacular as well!

After the Presentation event, I wrote thank you cards to each of the speakers. Years later, as a freshman at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I was looking for a summer internship in a high-tech company. I contacted one of the presenters, Joni Blakeslee, who still remembered me from the thank you card I had sent. I have kept in touch with her ever since.

I have always felt well supported as a girl in math and science in college and in high school. The biggest barrier for girls going into a technology field right now, I feel, is not the lack of resources or mentorship, but a lack of inspiration early on as a child in pursuing technology as a career. I am saddened that women continue to experience the "glass ceiling" and that an average female manager still earns less than her male counterparts. There are well-established support structures at some places but almost none at others. I hope that traditional attitudes toward the female role will keep changing and that women will continue to be inspired by the dream that brought them into high-tech in the first place.

My advice to others is to pursue your passion, whether it lies in high-tech or not. Don't let other people's accomplishments intimidate you, because you are the architect of your dream. Never stop learning, because there is always something you don't know.

🔥 Allison McCauley

Senior Systems Consultant, Lenovo

Technology is becoming more deeply connected in every industry, manufacturing, and service job we have. It is significantly important that women pursue these technical roles. My first technical job with Microsoft was in a group of 105—only two of us female. So, yes, I have had the experience of being one of the only women in the group. It is challenging to be successful in that situation—sometimes the "time to prove yourself" can last six months or more. Also, the guys usually don't look at a woman as the "go-to" person for a technical problem, and they tend to talk over the women in a technical forum or triage. However, I am happy to say that the women I have worked with in the technical field are impressive—goal oriented, hardworking, and creative—and do their jobs on par with their male counterparts.

Allison McCauley

"Take chances. Believe in yourself not what others say about you. Find a role model, and ask questions. Don't think you can't change—you can."

Nonetheless, none of that makes coming to work easy, especially when there is an existing gender personality conflict. However, I see many of the younger men in the United States changing their attitudes. The international male techies are sometimes a little more challenging since their cultural attitude toward gender does not always accept an equal base for men and women.

I became involved with IGNITE through a post at Microsoft. It is important to be involved in the community, and IGNITE enabled me to present a positive role model of a woman in technology. I hate hearing that women's enrollment in college for technical, math, and science classes is continually dropping. Girls need to know they have options—there are technology careers out there with long tenure and lots of variety. Being technically savvy can create a winning edge for a woman and give her the financial security to be independent.

The very first IGNITE meeting I spoke at was amazing. The other women on the panel were so inspiring, I realized then just how different all our journeys were to become the technical women we are today. None of us ever had anyone come and talk to us in high school about opportunities in technology and math and science, and yet somehow we all found our way. I felt that the breadth of variety of the women's stories would give all the girls someone to relate to. The reaction I got from that group

of girls at the first Presentation got me hooked, and for the past four years I have made time to speak at five or so schools every year.

My message to the girls is simple: Take chances. Believe in yourself not what others say about you. Find a role model, and ask questions. Don't think you can't change—you can. School is great and an equal opportunity we have here in the USA. However, if you don't embrace technology in school, that doesn't mean you can't still learn about it and make it your career. Pick up a book or browse the Internet and study a field of technology that interests you. Get a mentor (someone from IGNITE, for example). Self-study provided my entrance to the technology world, and I am happy I invested that time to change my world. If I can do it, you can too.

🔥 Ani Manjikian

Web/Graphic Designer

When I was born, my parents were told to forget about me. I would never walk, talk, or do much of anything useful. I had a condition known as hydrocephalus (or "water on the brain"). In those days, that kind of prognosis was very grim. Without correction by medication or shunts, you either died or ended up mentally retarded. Well, my condition corrected itself within nine months, leaving me with only a few manageable problems. If you and I were to meet on the street today, there is no way you could detect my condition. Needless to say, the doctors were wrong, and if I could find them, I would love to show them my college degree and my car.

Ani Manjikian
"So if you're a dreamer, go ahead and dream—just make sure you have somewhat of a plan to make it a reality."

My teen and college years were interesting, to say the least. I spent some of the time overseas living and learning other cultures in Saudi Arabia and Cyprus. Although I was "adopted" by a Greek family during my time in Cyprus, I was an outsider in both places because I was an American and a girl. I remember playing basketball with the boys on the Cyprus high school team and gaining the respect of a 6-foot-8 or so Greek. I didn't like the girls' team because it was more like a catfight than an actual game.

I'd have to say most of my school experiences were like that. I was always the odd one out, especially in computer classes. There I was, one of maybe two or three girls. One professor called me a "hacker" because while I solved the problem, I didn't do it in the structured, expected, "right" way. Another instructor didn't think I would get too far because I was too much of a dreamer. But there was a positive side too. I found a few great mentors in teachers who recognized my creative spirit and nurtured it.

Admittedly, I was a dreamer and in a big way. I wanted to own my own company, Lone Horse Enterprises, named after my belief in the independent spirit embodied by a solitary horse standing upon a cliff looking down upon his herd. The company was going to be this giant multimedia firm and I was going to be a famous writer and director.

I needed money to make this happen, of course. So I used my talents with computers to do so. Nothing glamorous or fancy, mind you—mainly just word processing, database management, data entry, CAD, and other practical stuff like that. It paid the bills and gave me money when I needed it, but I wasn't satisfied by it. As a hobby, I had been creative with computers, so I knew what that felt like.

Besides loving to play computer games, I had also tried writing and even dabbling with music and graphics. I never really considered doing graphic design full-time, though, because I couldn't draw a straight line in real life.

It wasn't until I discovered web design that I found my balance and realized that to be a good graphic designer, I could let the computer draw the straight lines for me. I came across this realization quite by accident, as web design was one of my duties as a training project coordinator. But the duty quickly became more because I wanted to learn more, so I could do all the fancy stuff I was seeing on other people's websites. So did I go back to school and learn? No, not really. I taught myself, mainly by looking at other people's code and trying to figure out how it worked. I do plan on going back to school because I know I need to fill in some gaps.

It was through my web design that I discovered IGNITE. Or, more accurately, IGNITE discovered me. It was October 2005. At the time, I had been in Washington for about eight months. My job hunt wasn't going all that well for lots of different reasons. One was the fact that I didn't believe in applying for a job unless I was ninety percent sure I was qualified for it. I had managed to get in with a small Whidbey Island web design firm and was working just a couple hours a month for one client when I was introduced to Cathi. She needed someone to update the IGNITE website with Presentation dates and reports.

I liked the idea of IGNITE from the first time Cathi explained it to me, but it wasn't until I read the first Presentation report that it hit me just how powerful the program is. Girls learning from other women that technology is cool and anyone can do it… Reading the reports made me wish that I had had something like IGNITE when I was growing up. I want to see IGNITE throughout the country and throughout the world. Trust me, it's needed. Better yet, go to any technical job fair and count how many women are present, looking for jobs. You won't find many.

Early 2006 was an interesting time for me. Even though I was involved with IGNITE and feeling em-powered by the stuff I read and edited as I posted it to the website, I was seriously considering trying to find another career. My job hunt still wasn't going that well and I wasn't making much money with the few web design jobs that I had. Then I discovered another mentor who encouraged me by sug-gesting that, instead of making job hunting a full-time job until I got a career, I should make web design a full-time career. Admittedly, I was hesitant, but this mentor, along with Cathi, helped me make some connections that led to jobs, confidence, money, and a company called Lone Horse Endeavors. Sure, LHE is only a one woman operation for now, but at least that dream now has the beginning of reality.

So if you're a dreamer, go ahead and dream—just make sure you have somewhat of a plan to make it a reality.

🔥 Axum Aragawi

Seattle University,
pursuing a degree in Business and Nonprofit Leadership
President, National Society of Black Engineers

I got involved in IGNITE when my high school teacher, Ms. Davidson, told me about it. I don't quite remember why else I got involved, but I can only imagine that I was drawn in by the fact that it was a program that would empower women to push themselves in a field dominated by men. In fact, I had to deal with those issues in my classroom, where I was usually among only three or four other girls.

Being in the science field, there's always competition. Competition for the "A," competition for internships, etc. And I've learned that that's how life is a lot of the time, a competition. That's taught me how to get what I want, how to reach my goals, and push myself so that I can succeed. I am very thankful because it's instilled in me a nature of persistence and determination . . . I get things done!

IGNITE was an outlet that allowed me to develop my skills and make me more qualified than the men I had to compete with. My

Axum Aragawi
"Meeting the women at Microsoft showed me how climbing up the ladder and being successful has little to do with how smart you are, but rather how determined and dedicated you are to achieving your goals."

most memorable experience with IGNITE was a field trip to Microsoft. That was the first time that I had ever taken a tour of a big corporation, and there I was in one of the biggest establishments in the world. After meeting all of the women who worked there and learning about the things that they were doing in their lives, I knew that I could do something big with my own life. Meeting these women showed me how climbing up the ladder and being successful has little to do with how smart you are, but rather how determined and dedicated you are to achieving your goals. Taking that trip to Microsoft really opened my eyes and showed me that I could make accomplishments just as big in my life . . . MAYBE EVEN BIGGER!

IGNITE has impacted me the most by giving me the self-confidence I needed in order to chase after my dreams. I see myself becoming a CEO of my own company one day and, to me, that's not as far-fetched of an idea as it may be for some. Getting involved in IGNITE has made me realize my first passion, which is to serve others and give back to the world. Through IGNITE, I've came across many women who have made such a tremendous impact on my life and I want to give back to others what has been given to me. I love mentoring others and serving my community. As a result of this, I have made it my purpose in life to use my passion to do good in others' lives.

🔥 Barbara Moore

Principal, South Lake High School

Barbara Moore

"So many of our children, particularly in the urban setting, don't explore beyond their boundaries. They don't know what exists outside their small world. It is up to us as educators to help expand their horizons. After all, we are preparing young people for the future."

I saw an IGNITE Presentation at my school before joining some students on a field trip to Microsoft. Given this experience, I really appreciate what IGNITE has to offer the students. Exposure is so critical. There are many fields out there that our kids know nothing about. So many of our children, particularly in the urban setting, don't explore beyond their boundaries. They don't know what exists outside their small world. It is up to us as educators to help expand their horizons. After all, we are preparing young people for the future. Their future is very different from the one that middle-aged and older adults faced growing up, and we are doing these young people a disservice if we do not prepare them.

It is also important for administrators to get out from behind the desk and experience the world for themselves; otherwise, we will lose touch with what is happening now and become unable to help our students. I would encourage at least one administrator from each school to go out on field trips with the girls. When I went, I saw the employees working in teams. As a result, we have now incorporated project-based learning into our school curriculum.

I would encourage every school to have an IGNITE program to draw upon because the field trips, Presentations, and other events help the students associate the unknown with what they know. For example, during the Microsoft field trip, the students watched employees produce identification badges for a mandatory check before they could move beyond the lobby. This impressed the young ladies because they related this to the ID badges that we require at school.

IGNITE is definitely worth the time or energy because the payoff is so good. It gives students hope, confidence, and a chance to see the opportunities available to them.

For my kids, it was phenomenal. One girl who stands out in my mind went on to pursue more education after high school and now writes for a journal. IGNITE helped drive her and direct her into technology. The teachers love IGNITE too. It offers a whole different way of looking at teaching and learning. We started IGNITE for the girls, but we all gained from the experiences—teachers and administrators alike.

🔥 Barbara Quintana

College/Career Center Specialist, Seattle Public Schools

I first became involved with IGNITE because it intrigued me to think that our female students could receive great exposure to "hot jobs" in technology. The IGNITE concept—women sharing their personal stories with teenage girls—showed me the potential of the program right away.

In my job as a college/career specialist, I have found the IGNITE program to be a wonderful opportunity for our female students! Hoping to reduce the shortage of females in the high-tech industry, IGNITE gives young women the chance to investigate—up close, personal, and hands on—the many careers that are available. After an inspirational Presentation, the students always get a follow-up field trip to see exactly what these women do. Spending time with the women and their colleagues in a real world work environment is empowering. Connections are made, "bridges crossed," and a whole new world is suddenly open.

Barbara Quintana

"Spending time with the women and their colleagues in a real world work environment is empowering. Connections are made, "bridges crossed," and a whole new world is suddenly open."

In the two high schools where I work, I have seen firsthand the impact of the IGNITE program on many young women. They often go to the first event simply out of curiosity. After attending a few events, they are still curious, but with a greater degree of knowledge and focus. Now they have some idea of the types of jobs out there and they want to know what kinds of courses to take to prepare for them. They are more open-minded and realistic about their choices.

IGNITE gives students the knowledge they need to make sound choices. Through IGNITE activities they learn to say with confidence, "Yes, I like this and will think about it" or "No, this isn't what I want to study, but I found it very interesting." Of course, what's most exciting to hear is "Wow—this is the career area for me! Now I know exactly what I want to study in college AND I know I'd better work a little harder in school."

I think IGNITE offers a good mix of inspiration and reality. The students are touched that professional women have taken an interest in them and excited by the women's experiences in the workplace. IGNITE is women reaching out to other (younger) women, and it's that personal contact that really makes the difference!

🔥 Candy Chiang

*University of Washington,
pursuing a degree in Computer Engineering*

Candy Chiang

"IGNITE is not for geeks; it is a program that helps you get involved and overcome obstacles like gender issues, low self-esteem, and the fear of being in a class with only guys. IGNITE gives girls the opportunity to talk to someone who has actually experienced these things in the past."

In high school, I felt different from other girls because of my interest in technology. There was only one other girl in my Cisco class. It was weird and uncomfortable because I got called tomboy, and other names. Then my teacher signed me up for my first IGNITE event and I found other girls just like me. Meeting them made me feel like I was at home and not an outcast.

If I had not been in IGNITE I wouldn't have met so many people in industry, especially women in networking. There was one woman named Mo, who invited me to meet with her every weekend at her office for hands-on experience. And she was only the beginning . . . I met other people through IGNITE events and worked on the IGNITE video with students and people from different high schools and different companies.

Another one of my favorite things in IGNITE was participating in the poster contest. In my entry, I tried to put together what I had experienced through IGNITE in pictures and words. I won the contest!

Before IGNITE, I had applied for a summer internship with Microsoft and didn't get it, but after being involved with IGNITE, I got my first Microsoft internship. I've been interning with them for five years now, both in high school and in college. In college, Microsoft hired me part-time as a program manager. When I graduate next year, I hope they offer me a full-time job!

Since going to college, I have gone back to my high school to talk to girls about my IGNITE experiences. I really enjoy volunteering for the Presentations because it is a really good networking opportunity.

IGNITE is not for geeks; it is a program that helps you get involved and overcome obstacles like gender issues, low self-esteem, and the fear of being in a class with only guys. IGNITE gives girls the opportunity to talk to someone who has actually experienced these things in the past. The connection made between the women and girls is really important because the women can give the girls suggestions and advice as to what they should do as students in high school.

🔥 Carola Dopps

Certified School Counselor
Vocational Teacher
Educational Consultant
IGNITE Eastside Coordinator

I became involved in IGNITE for two reasons. First, it fit with my consulting business, which creates partnerships between industry and education and programs for students that help them choose careers. Education often doesn't understand industry, and industry doesn't understand why education works the way it does. Changes in those two systems happen in very different ways. My job is to facilitate the communication between the two and help them both achieve their goals while relying on each other. Second, I was managing an academy for a diverse population of immigrant children speaking 60 languages. One goal of the school was to get girls involved in technology programs, and IGNITE was a perfect fit.

Carola Dopps
"IGNITE helps girls find their role models. It also allows the volunteers to use their passion and guide the girls in how to use their own strengths and skills in this world."

Born and raised in the Netherlands, I feel that I have a broad and unique perspective on both education and industry. Additionally, as a family therapist, I understand the link between the stresses that cause problems within a family and the difficulties adults face at work. The best advice I can give on this is not to work for the money. Work for what you really want in life.

I've heard a joke that goes: "Do you know why so many adults ask kids what they want to be when they grow up? Because the adults are still searching for ideas." What makes this funny is that, sadly, it is too often true. The question should not be what do I want to be, but what do I really want in life. What are my skills, and what am I doing with them? Answer these questions and life can be a journey because you will allow yourself to grow, learn things, and then move on to something else.

I have a passion for helping young people find their paths in life. It is great to help them figure out a direction, what they are good at, what they love, what they want to do, and then set a goal based on these findings. Things are more complicated for kids these days than when I was growing up. They have too many choices, and if they don't get the right support and information from people, they set lower expectations for themselves.

It is worse for girls, who in some ways learn more by example than boys. Girls need role models who have actually done what they want to do; otherwise, they often feel that they may not be able to achieve their goals. This is what is so great about IGNITE. It helps girls find their role models. It also allows the volunteers to use their passion and guide the girls in how to use their own strengths and skills in this world.

IGNITE is a strong program because big changes are made through the simple action of telling a story and sharing a common experience. The women really bond to the program and stay with it. It is a very smart program because it builds connections between industry and schools and focuses girls on IT.

It is the reactions of the girls and their families that keep me committed to IGNITE. The feedback from the girls involved in the program is very insightful. What the girls are learning and doing as a result of their participation in IGNITE is just amazing. One girl's mother wrote me to say how excited she was for her daughter. To hear the girls say "you changed my life" or "this is a wonderful experience" touches my heart and reminds me just how valuable the program is.

🔥 Catherine Hall

Ballard High School
entering Washington State University, fall 2007

I found IGNITE during my sophomore year at Ballard High School. My dad is an engineer and I've always been interested in what he does, so when I heard about IGNITE, I went to one of their informational meetings and listened to the women from Microsoft. After that, I went on the Microsoft field trip. I really love technology, and going on that field trip really made me want to get a job at Microsoft. They were really creative and showed us things that you only see in movies. Things that you'd never think would work in real life—actually working in real life! It was really neat.

Being in IGNITE has given me a comfortable way to explore my options. It is really interesting to hear that some of the women started in one job, moved on from there, and found the career they absolutely love. That was reassuring for me, because unlike my dad, who always knew he wanted to be an engineer, I am not sure yet just what I want to do. I do know, however, it will involve computers, technology, or engineering, because I love computers, am a computer person, and have taken an engineering class on 3-D modeling.

Catherine Hall
"Teachers and counselors, please remember to talk to girls about technology and engineering. Girls don't hear that much about these classes."

Meeting the women at IGNITE events, I see now that there are more jobs out there than I ever knew, including many jobs that I have never even heard of before. I'm looking forward to doing a job shadow with IGNITE, so I can learn more about them firsthand.

A lot of girls are iffy on technology and think they can't do it. They should come and check out an IGNITE Presentation. There is nothing bad you can get out of it. I say go for it and see what you will find. You can always experiment and find out what you want to do.

Teachers and counselors, please remember to talk to girls about technology and engineering. Girls don't hear that much about these classes. I should know. As a freshman, I struggled to find the classes that suited me and felt like I was being pushed toward classes in marketing and business. Sure, I didn't know exactly what I wanted, but I knew marketing wasn't going to cut it. IGNITE helped me to find the support I needed to explore the programs that interested me most.

🔥 Charmell Slaughter

Charmell Slaughter

"I've always told Cathi that if she hadn't created IGNITE, I would have had to. If I see that there is a need that matters to me, I keep going until I find a way to fill it. And helping girls realize they have the power to achieve anything, especially in technology, matters to me."

Personal Development Facilitator
East Coast Regional Coordinator, IGNITE U.S.

As a young girl, I had many things going for me. Although there wasn't a lot of money, I had two parents who loved me. There were, however, critical issues that became obstacles. Even though I took calculus and physics in high school, I had absolutely no confidence or focus in those subjects. My parents expected me to go to college, but they did not know how to guide me in achieving that goal. We didn't know anyone at high-tech jobs so it never occurred to me to look into science or technology. And to me, back then, computers were just big word processors.

So I went to Bryn Mawr College right after high school to study cultural anthropology. My freshman year, I took a PASCAL programming class and it was a horrible experience. The professor was the most cold, unapproachable woman I'd ever met and one who I couldn't, and wouldn't, want to identify with. The only black teachers I saw were one woman with a PhD in sociology and one crazy guy, without tenure, who taught English. Any other black staff members were the ones who cleaned the dorms, served the food, cut the grass, and locked up the buildings at night. That made me feel inadequate, unprepared, and afraid of losing touch with my people. So, at age 21, I dropped out in my junior year and joined the Air Force.

In the Air Force, I was assigned training to become a medical technician. This made me connect real-life situations with science and realize that I was good at it, if it was taught in a relevant way. This experience taught me another very important lesson: if I set my mind to something, I could do it. So as I was finishing my military service, I decided that I wanted to become a test engineer for Microsoft.

I would come to Seattle every other weekend, and my husband would teach me everything he did at the Microsoft lab. I became acquainted with his boss and coworkers and let them know I was looking for work once I left the service. As they saw more and more of me, they saw how much I wanted this

and learned that I could talk the talk and had some hands-on job awareness of the products and the hardware. They also respected my husband, so they gave me an interview.

The person who hired me said, "We can always find someone with more experience and more knowledge about PCs and software, but I don't think I could ever find anybody who wants this job more than you do."

I jumped into my job at Microsoft with both feet but scared to death. That's what happens when you have a dream and take a huge leap of faith to make it come true. It wasn't that I always wanted to be a software tester, but it was about being with Microsoft and seeing where my future with them would take me. I traded them my time, energy, and willingness to learn and work hard in exchange for good pay, experience, and the opportunity to do even more.

I am not one to rest on my laurels, so I began looking for a way to give back to the community, and that's how I discovered IGNITE. I read an announcement in an employee newsletter and volunteered to speak at local Seattle area high schools. I was looking for a way to motivate young people and this seemed like the perfect opportunity.

After joining IGNITE, I quickly discovered that I loved doing their Presentations and running inspirational workshops for girls at the conferences. Although I had been a public speaker before, and felt the adrenaline rush that comes from being in front of a group, there was something different about sharing my story with the young women. A part of it was helping them to see that there are more options for their lives and careers than they might have realized. It was also gratifying to see the noticeable changes in their posture and interest level as the Presentation progressed and they realized the possibilities for their future.

I've always told Cathi that if she hadn't created IGNITE, I would have had to. If I see that there is a need that matters to me, I keep going until I find a way to fill it. And helping girls realize they have the power to achieve anything, especially in technology, matters to me. Also, not seeing people like myself was one of the reasons I lost confidence in college, and I don't want to see that happen to others. IGNITE women really help girls because we remember what is was like to be a girl in school, to hear the messages that society directs at all of us about what we are expected to do and how we are expected to feel, and we know where those messages hit the girls in their young lives. Working with IGNITE, I have become aware of just how many young people feel there is no hope for their future. They feel like they are nothing special and have no power to change things, especially when they are having trouble in school and at home. IGNITE tries to change this by making girls aware of their choices and empowering them with the knowledge to make ones that will help them succeed in their lives.

When I make my IGNITE presentations, I always tell the girls, "I'm not here to confront you, to dis you, or discipline you. I am here because I believe in you and we need each other. Microsoft needs people just like you to help with product design because women use so many of the products and your opinion will help us get them right." No one has ever told them that before.

IGNITE has had significant benefits in my own life as well. By telling my story, I realized there were two key pieces in my success. One, it helps to know people, and two, networks have supported me my whole life, though they have not always been visible or tangible ones. IGNITE is a wonderful example of one of those networks, and I have used it to find my own role models and make many lasting relationships and connections.

I used IGNITE to help me to grow and get clear about what I value. When I was ready to move on from Microsoft, I already knew what I was looking for because I had been talking about what is important to me for so long in IGNITE Presentations. One of those things was a college degree, a BA in Business Administration from the University of Washington, which I obtained while at Microsoft.

I have recently returned to New Jersey to be closer to my aging parents and am working at a great job with exciting new challenges and huge potential. Though I am physically distant now from IGNITE's Puget Sound events and activities, I remain committed to mentoring young girls so that they can find the path in life that not only feeds their passion, but also gives them a way to support themselves and their families.

🔥 Christie M. Ong

*Rochester Institute of Technology,
pursuing a degree in Advertising & Public Relations*

I love technology. It helps me with so many things that people take for granted. For example, I prefer text messaging to phone conversations. You can't always understand people on the phone, but with text messaging, all the words are there in front of me.

You see, I am deaf.

I became involved with IGNITE in my first year of high school after my web design teacher suggested that I attend an upcoming IGNITE Presentation at Ingraham High School. After that Presentation, I signed up for every IGNITE event that came my way. When we went on the field trip to Microsoft, the women were so welcoming. I hope that one day my future employers will be as understanding of my condition as those at Microsoft and IGNITE.

Large groups are particularly hard for me because I don't always catch everything that is going on. Not at the IGNITE events. They always made sure there was a sign interpreter around, so I didn't miss a single thing.

Christie M. Ong
"IGNITE isn't only for people interested in technology. It's about networking with career women and girls from other schools and learning from them. Their experiences will have an impact on you, if you just keep an open mind and listen."

On the Microsoft field trip, I saw their vision for the future of home and office space design and asked if they had disabled end-users in mind when they designed these. They replied that the accessibility labs have disabled workers who give them valuable input. Later on, at the Microsoft Digi-Girlz camp, I met some of the deaf workers and that inspired me.

I love the idea behind IGNITE, inspiring others. I know my experiences with IGNITE were part of the reason that I chose the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York. IGNITE helped me explore my options and seriously pursue a career in advertising and public relations, something that I had been dreaming about doing for quite a while. Yes, it means I'm thousands of miles away from my parents and support systems, but I'm learning about something that I love.

It is so important for girls with any kind of disability to participate in IGNITE. IGNITE isn't only for people interested in technology. It's about networking with career women and girls from other schools and learning from them. Their experiences will have an impact on you, if you just keep an open mind and listen.

🔥 Grace Xie

Grace Xie

"IGNITE makes girls feel special because they know it is just for them. I think all girls should go to IGNITE. You don't have to be tech savvy or know anything about technology—IGNITE is helpful for anyone. Go to at least one meeting and get hooked."

University of Washington, pursuing a degree in Technical Communication

I became involved in IGNITE while I was a student at Franklin High School in Seattle. As a freshman at the University of Washington, I went on an IGNITE job shadow with Catherine Moya, a technical writer at Microsoft. There were a lot of meetings the day of my job shadow, and even though Cathy kept calling me the "fly on the wall" during these meetings, I still enjoyed the experience and felt like I belonged. Of course, I couldn't say anything, but I still felt that if I did work at Microsoft, I would like being there. I loved how fast-paced the environment was. The job shadow gave me a better idea of what I wanted in a job and inspired me to find more ways to get involved with technical communication. It also gave me more motivation to look for a class or internship to get me started. Cathi was really helpful; she gave me the feeling that I could ask any possibly stupid question and it would be okay. I only wish I had known more about the procedures, which, after the job shadow, makes me want to find out more for myself and do more job shadows with better questions next time.

IGNITE has meant a lot to me. Cathi, the founder, is so devoted and always trying to help. There are so many resources and lots of people I can talk to if I have questions, even now as a college student. The resources that IGNITE has given me over the years have led to more opportunities for me.

IGNITE makes girls feel special because they know it is just for them. I think all girls should go to IGNITE. You don't have to be tech-savvy or know anything about technology—IGNITE is helpful for anyone. Go to at least one meeting and get hooked.

🔥 Harriet Van Duersen

Statewide Equity Coordinator,
Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (retired)

The value of IGNITE is that it is a working model of how to blend the distinct environments of education, business, and community into an atmosphere of cooperation that supports the development of a key component of our workforce—women. No matter how much people wish women could stay home, it is just not feasibly possible. As baby boomers retire, women are needed now more than ever. Unfortunately, though, women are traditionally placed in occupations that pay less and do not increase in pay on a regular or fair basis. These jobs often barely pay the bills. We need women to be self-sufficient and able to use all their skills and talents. Women are very bright and enjoy technology. If we wish to remain competitive and innovative, we need to put that asset to use as our nation continues to forge ahead in the use and development of new technologies.

Innovation is a key in education as well. Teachers have less and less time to find new ways to excite and engage their students. IGNITE helps address this situation by providing teachers and students with a wide variety of resources, including Presentations, field trips, and job shadows. These, in turn, provide inspiration, support, awareness, and opportunity.

Harriet Van Duersen
"IGNITE inspires. The successes of the original IGNITE girls brings tears to my eyes. I can't even begin to enumerate all the positive outcomes. The program has enriched the lives of everyone who has been involved—the teachers, the students, the mentors—everyone."

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🔥 Joanne Brandsma

Joanne Brandsma

"The most fascinating thing about IGNITE is that it doesn't take a lot of effort or a huge commitment from its volunteers to make a big impact. A few moments of time and personal insight from many different people makes it a success. Anyone can do this, because we all have a story to tell. And it's those stories that inspire and engage the next generation."

Center of Excellence Program Manager, Microsoft

It still surprises me that I work at Microsoft, because I didn't even own a computer until college. In fact, I started college intent on being a nurse, but when I heard about the work schedule, I knew that career wasn't going to be a good choice for me. So I switched majors to accounting. One of the required courses involved computers and I really liked it. The theory behind the software development life cycle and problem solving just clicked for me, so I finished my accounting degree and then went for an information systems graduate degree.

After college, I was an information technology auditor before joining Microsoft, where I started as an internal auditor. Now I am a Center of Excellence program manager in a department that supports all the other information technology departments in the company. Who knows what I'm going to do next.

I had not been at Microsoft for very long before one of the women I worked with asked if I wanted to be part of a women's group. Part of my job was to learn about recruiting women for Microsoft because the company believes in having our workforce mirror our customers, women are very important. However, the company was having problems recruiting women out of college. One of the women in my group suggested the problem went all the way back to high school, so I started doing some research. The various IT recruiting managers told me that we were having difficulty recruiting women because, while they were going to college, they weren't going for IT. So the numbers just weren't there.

Looking for something to do to make a difference, I stumbled onto the IGNITE program. I wanted to make sure the program was for real, so I called its founder, Cathi. After we talked in detail, I knew I would have loved a group like that when I was in high school. So I started selling IGNITE to the other women in my Microsoft women's group. Since many of them did not feel they had a story tell, I used the questions that Cathi had asked me. Through their answers, the group discovered that each one

of them had a story that would touch someone in high school, so we got involved. In 2005, our group volunteered nearly 40 hours for IGNITE.

I have really enjoyed my IGNITE experiences. They have taught me a great deal. I did a few Presentations at various high schools and was shocked at how much things have changed. Kids are so much more grown up than when I was in my high school days. Sure, they still ask about money, but not for buying expensive cars or jewelry. They ask because they want to help support their families.

I remember at my first Presentation, I was so nervous. With all those girls staring at me, I could almost hear them saying, "I hope you have something important to tell me." Meanwhile, I was thinking, "I hope they like what I am about to say." As I started telling my story, I realized that the girls were actually interested in me and the story that I had to share. When I relaxed, so did the girls, and soon we were like good friends talking and sharing valuable information. The girls became really excited when I told them there were so many options for careers, especially at Microsoft. I reassured them that the company had jobs for the very technical and the not so technical.

The other difference I noticed during my presentation came from technology itself. As I talked, I noticed that the girls were multi-tasking. Some were taking notes, others text messaging. I was a little put off by it, wondering if they were even paying attention. They proved that they were when it came time to ask questions. There were some very good questions that made realize just how much they had heard.

Encouraging the girls, giving them confidence, and listening to their insightful questions got me so excited. Before IGNITE, I liked my job and had a real passion for what I did, but because there were so many others doing the same thing, I sometimes felt like one in a million with no real chance to make an impact on the world. But after talking to the girls and hearing them say that they saw me as a way to better their lives and see new opportunities, it made me feel really special. I hope that in some way I am changing the world, so that one girl who wasn't considering college before is now seriously thinking about going.

Other women in my group have had similar experiences. They come back from speaking at Presentations like they just felt the adrenaline rush of sailing off a ski jump. They come back so excited about their jobs and the fact that they've connected with girls who want to be in the Microsoft high school and college intern programs.

I initially volunteered, and continue to do so, because I felt it was my responsibility as a woman. The girls love being able to look at us and say, "I look just like her, so I can do that." As adults, the women in my group do the same thing. We look at the executives in our company and look for women just like us.

I also want to give the girls something I once needed. When I was in college, I thought more along the lines of working as a bookkeeper in a small mom and pop kind of place. Large corporations were something I had never considered until I met recruiters from public accounting firms. I was lucky that my college had them, because that helped open a whole new world for me.

When you're from a small town and so poor that you're always counting every penny, it is hard to imagine what the rest of the world is really like. So many of these girls are like me. They are bright and curious, but so involved with trying just to make it that they can't really see all the opportunities available to them. IGNITE really makes a difference by helping them to see some of the things they might have missed.

The most fascinating thing about IGNITE is that it doesn't take a lot of effort or a huge commitment from its volunteers to make a big impact. A few moments of time and personal insight from many different people makes it a success. Anyone can do this, because we all have a story to tell. And it's those stories that inspire and engage the next generation.

🔥 Julia Fallon

Career Specialist,
Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

One day during college biology class, I realized that I wanted a career in technology. I had taken four years of math and science in a private high school in New York and always loved puzzles and problem solving, so technology seemed more of a natural choice than science. I switched majors and was mentored by a professor who saw my natural ability and talents and helped me hone them. I graduated with a degree in business education from New York University and later earned a degree in educational technology from Pepperdine University.

Julia Fallon
"I became, and stay, involved with IGNITE because of how simple it is and how profoundly it affects both the girls and the women who participate."

Helped by my knack for translating "tech speak" into plain English, my career path has led me to jobs in both industry and education. In either of those fields, I am a teacher because I have to help people understand that technology isn't something they should fear, but something that they should embrace because it will change their lives.

I understand the fear part, because fear was something I had to overcome in college. No one ever told me that I was not smart enough to learn technology, but I had this sense that understanding and using technology was a "guy only" thing. There were no girls in IT when I was in college. It wasn't until a male professor saw something in me and told me he believed I could do it that I even considered pursuing technology. I need to help girls understand that technology doesn't care if you are male or female—if you are good at it, you should just do it.

Girls usually have the anti-social nerd-girl image of IT people. They think we are locked away somewhere working on a computer. Yes, I have my nerdy tendencies, but I am very social. The field of project management that I work in is about problem solving, making relationships, talking to people, and learning from others. The computer is a tool that I use in my work, but I'm not chained to it or my office.

I became, and stay, involved with IGNITE because of how simple it is and how profoundly it affects both the girls and the women who participate. IGNITE women all have similar stories about how we got to IT, but we are all different and the girls respond to that. IGNITE girls ask thoughtful questions, most of them about how to balance work and career. I am able to tell them that technology has given me the flexibility to pick and choose, so that I have the lifestyle I want.

🔥 Karen Peterson

*CEO, Puget Sound Center for
Teaching, Learning and Technology
Principal Investigator, National Girls Collaborative Project*

Karen Peterson

"Statistics from the National Science Foundation show that we will retain more girls and students of color when we make learning more hands-on. Boys also learn better with a learning approach based on problem solving, so changing curriculums and incorporating programs like IGNITE will ultimately help all students."

The girls we serve have a sense of who they are, but society has already started to send them messages that more likely than not will conflict with this self-image. When they meet professional women who look and sound like them, there is a light bulb that turns on. The girls say to themselves, "Oh, I can do what she has done." At the high school level, this is a powerful realization that can have far-reaching impacts. Girls who once did not really know what it meant to be a scientist or computer programmer now consider these as possible career opportunities.

In this way, IGNITE has been able to change the school culture, and the model is not site specific. The components of the model are research based and work by engaging professional women as role models to interact with girls who would otherwise not be exposed to careers in science and technology. This process is translatable and replicable anywhere. The trickiest thing about it is finding the human champion who will make it happen in a community.

High schools should have IGNITE because the program often helps keep kids interested in going to college or sparks an interest where there wasn't any. IGNITE focuses on the results and engages kids. Too many people believe that, since the math gap is gone, all the problems related to girls entering the technology field have been fixed. But this could not be further from the truth. Neither the curriculum nor the climate has changed to address the way girls think or learn. College programs are not necessarily hands-on, experiential, or focused on problem solving. If they were, we might engage girls more. Statistics from the National Science Foundation show that we will retain more girls and students of color when we make learning more hands-on. Boys also learn better with a learning approach based on problem solving, so changing curriculums and incorporating programs like IGNITE will ultimately help all students.

For years, the United States was at the forefront of the development of technology. Now we have to make sure we keep up. Part of this is due to the underrepresentation of women in technology, science, and engineering. Whenever a significant portion of the population is not represented, we lose a perspective. Companies are importing people from other countries for specific skills because we are not preparing enough of our own. The need is great and, in a way, very critical to our country's infrastructure. If our own people are not working in technology, we will no longer be in charge of the technology. The people who can learn, manage, and create the technology will have the power to choose and shape the future.

I really believe that for our world to be the kind of place we want to live in, everyone should have access to whatever career they want. They should not think, "Well, I can't do that because I am a girl." It is so wonderful, so exiting, to hear the IGNITE reports of girls who say, "I never thought I'd be interested in technology, but I am." Not everyone needs to go into technology, but everyone should know it is an option, and an option that pays very well, too.

🔥 Kelly Elston

Kelly Elston

"I would advise any girl, whether she's interested in technology or not, to join IG-NITE. Then keep your mind open. IGNITE is a good program for anyone who has a lot of careers in mind, but isn't sure of the career that they really want. IGNITE gives you the hands-on experience you need to make your decision."

University of Washington
Human Resources Lead, Sears

I was a freshman in high school when I went to my first IGNITE event, a full-day conference at Microsoft. At the time, I had heard about Microsoft but had no idea what they did. Learning more about Microsoft, however, wasn't the reason I went on the trip. I was concerned about how my interest in computers fit in with my passion for finding a career that was very people oriented. My Cisco networking teacher, Mrs. Cummings, suggested that I should go on the trip and learn about the broad range of jobs available to those who had an interest in technology. Since I trusted Mrs. Cummings, I went, and I'm glad I did. Among all the interesting and diverse job opportunities that I learned about on that day, one in particular still sticks in my mind. I found out that Microsoft had a legal department, which meant jobs that could use my interest in criminal justice and computers.

After that experience, I started taking more computer classes. It soon became apparent that I did not like the ones that focused on hardware, but really loved the ones that taught software. When I turned 16, I went to work for CompUSA and put some of my skills to work. I also continued to take advantage of IGNITE opportunities, including job shadowing with product developers and accountants at Microsoft. It was through those experiences that I realized that I liked the business end of technology. One of my job shadow mentors was so much like me. He had many diverse interests and wanted to study everything. This helped me relax and know that I was okay with my choices.

On another job shadow, I teamed up with a human resources manager. She helped me understand issues behind managing people. I enjoyed the experience so much that I decided to follow in this mentor's footsteps. It was the breakthrough I had been looking for, a job that combined my love of working with people and my fascination with computers.

I can't say enough of my job shadowing experiences. They have been so influential in the choices that I have made. The mentors are people who want to see you succeed. They make it a point to tell you everything that they can in the three days that you are following them around. I mean, you look at a job and then think, "How do I get there? There are so many different ways." The job shadow mentors, and the other women of IGNITE, help you with this. They tell you what they did, the courses they took in college, and some of their mistakes or shortcuts. That way, you know what to, and what not to, do.

I took advantage of all the IGNITE experiences that I could in high school and am looking forward to doing the same thing in college. And because of what I learned through IGNITE, I know that I'm focused on the courses that I need. In fact, I'm looking forward to getting a summer internship through IGNITE, now that I've completed some of my business courses.

I would advise any girl, whether she's interested in technology or not, to join IGNITE. Then keep your mind open. IGNITE is a good program for anyone who has a lot of careers in mind, but isn't sure of the career that they really want. IGNITE gives you the hands-on experience you need to make your decision.

🔥 Lani Bonadea

Lani Bonadea

"IGNITE will give you the network and resources to go into technology and the empowerment to follow your heart. You'll be pretty surprised about all the opportunities available in technology. What you think is geeky now in high school is really cool when you get older."

Shoreline Community College, pursuing a degree in Physics

I learned about IGNITE from a family member. During high school, I lived on a small island in the Puget Sound that was geographically close to Seattle, but the water that separated my island from the mainland created a gulf that was deep and technologically isolating. My high school was so small that we didn't have computer classes. I did, however, manage to attend IGNITE presentations and field trips through my family member who lived in Seattle.

When I started attending community college, I could take technology classes, attend IGNITE Presentations, go on field trips, and job shadow with women who worked in technical jobs. Just getting to see what they did and realizing that I could be doing that made it feel very real to me. It fueled my determination to keep working and keep trying. People I met through IGNITE had experience and could tell me exactly what I should be doing. They would say things like "you're on the right track," or "this will give you one up in the job market." It gave me a lot of confidence, learning what I needed to do and how to get where I wanted to go from women who are already there, doing a fabulous job. I was especially impressed when some of these women were only a few years older than me.

Since I had to work my way through school, I took a break and traveled to clear my mind and consider my options. Now I'm back studying physics and really excited about it. How often do you hear that? I am not sure what I'll do with it yet, but I know I am going to do something I am passionate about.

For those of you thinking about going to IGNITE events, do so with an open mind. IGNITE will give you the network and resources to go into technology and the empowerment to follow your heart. You'll be pretty surprised about all the opportunities available in technology. What you think is geeky now in high school is really cool when you get older. There are awesome jobs offering so many ways to make money and have choices. IGNITE gave me the confidence to choose what I really love and know that my dreams will work out. Let IGNITE have the same impact on you.

🔥 Larisa Goldin

Owner, Dreamclinic Massage

I grew up in a household before computers were mainstream. Although my parents both worked as software programmers, I was completely disinterested in technology. I thought it must be boring to sit in front of a computer all day for a job and that such a job must be anti-social.

I got to know computers, out of necessity, only after I started my first company in the early nineties. I did not have a lot of money and the business needed a small network and software to track customers, vendors, and transactions. So I conquered my fear and learned whatever I needed to make the business work. And in the process I discovered I was actually enjoying myself, especially doing database programming.

In 1995, when I sold my business and went to work for InstallShield Software Corporation, my job as webmaster was to build the company's first website. It was a dream job. It was very creative and I got to interact with customers as well as all the departments in the company. I noticed, however, that I was surrounded by men on all sides. There were so very few women graduating with computer science degrees that even if the company had wanted to hire more women, the female candidate pool just did not exist. That's when I first had the desire to reach out to younger women and "open their eyes" to the fact that technology jobs weren't boring or difficult. They were just jobs in the technology field.

Larisa Goldin

"If I were to say one thing to all the girls and women who might be reading this, it would be to keep your mind open to the power of what technology can do. Whether you want to be a fashion designer, a musician, a teacher, or anything else, the better you understand computers, networks, and programming languages, the more options you will have open to you."

I learned about IGNITE, which was just getting started, when I moved to Seattle in 1999 to manage software development for a wireless start-up. I couldn't have been more excited. Here was an organization doing exactly what I had dreamed about doing—reaching out to high school girls, educating them about career options in the technology sector, and building their confidence so that they could succeed in technology or in any field. I joined right away.

Watching IGNITE grow from the sheer brainstorming sessions to what it has become today is absolutely phenomenal. Over the years, I would have gone to every presentation, if I had more time. The presentations that I did attend were just amazing. Watching the girls was like looking back at myself. And the speakers . . . Energetic and successful women united in one goal wanting to give back and help the younger generation. Their attitude and passion created an atmosphere of tremendous energy and fun. Cathi, who knows both worlds of industry and education, has created a seamless partnership between the two that continues to grow and expand. The first generation is already giving back and helping the next one along, spreading the energy and passion that was infused in them.

Meanwhile, there have been big changes in my own life as well. Just three years after moving to Seattle, I decided to make a total career change. While I enjoyed working with computers and creating software, I was drawn to wellness and wanted to contribute in this area even more. I started Dreamclinic, now one of Seattle's most successful massage clinics. My friends and family thought it was ironic that here I had these highly valuable computer skills that would be wasted now that my focus was bringing massage to the masses.

Not so, I discovered. Rather than turn off my computer skills, I found they were invaluable in helping me set up a successful business. I built the website for Dreamclinic and then I built the integrated software that we now use to track our clients, all of our daily transactions, and the status of insurance claims and payments. My computer expertise turned out to be a great asset in the success and growth of Dreamclinic and also opened my eyes to the new reality of today's world. This reality is that no matter what business you are in, no matter what your love is, computers and software are part of what is needed to be successful.

When I look back on the unusual path my career has taken from building websites and commercial software to helping people heal and de-stress with therapeutic massage, I am very grateful for everything I learned while I worked in the high-tech industry. It gives me confidence and an edge every day. If I were to say one thing to all the girls and women who might be reading this, it would be to keep your mind open to the power of what technology can do. Whether you want to be a fashion designer, a musician, a teacher, or anything else, the better you understand computers, networks, and programming languages, the more options you will have open to you.

🔥 Linda Thomas

System Safety Engineer, Boeing
Society of Women Engineers - Region J Governor 2007-2008

I became involved with IGNITE through the Society of Women Engineers - Pacific NW section. Cathi Rodgveller had been recruiting our members to speak at local schools and I felt I could make a difference to young women. I wanted to let them know it's possible to make it in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Initiative fields. I consider myself very fortunate to have had support to pursue STEM while I was in school and want to make that support available to the next generation.

All students have potential and IGNITE is part of the process to encourage them. IGNITE strengthens the three-legged chair that is education by introducing students to women they can identify with. I can't stress enough that the kids are depending on us now as we will depend on them to take care of us in the future.

Women today have more opportunities for pursuing STEM careers than I had many years ago. Thanks to innovative programs like IGNITE that encourage young women to pursue careers in STEM fields, there is no reason for them to be afraid or uncertain about considering technology as a lifelong career. We also need to continue programs that educate parents and teachers regarding the importance of encouraging young women to enter and persevere in STEM professions.

I've experienced just about everything in my career, and I've managed to "roll with the punches" and also experience many accomplishments. To the girls, I say, "Anything is possible. Don't give up on your dreams. Be resourceful. If you miss one opportunity, persevere until another comes along. When the going gets tough, don't quit!"

Linda Thomas
"Anything is possible. Don't give up on your dreams. Be resourceful; if you miss one opportunity, persevere until another comes along. When the going gets tough, don't quit!"

🔥 Lori Longthorne

Business Manager, Microsoft

Lori Longthorne

"As a woman in technology, you can still be fashionable, be feminine, and have the money that gives you the power to do what you really like."

My career in technology started shortly after high school. Working as a secretary at Boeing, there were always opportunities to learn and do something new. People would look around and ask who was willing to tackle a particular challenge. Many people were afraid and uncomfortable with change, so they did not volunteer. I, on the other hand, did not hesitate. I was the first in my group to learn how to use a computer and quickly became a trainer for all the others.

Continuing to stay at the forefront of the development of e-commerce, I eventually moved on to Microsoft, where I learned about IGNITE. I became involved with the program because, when I was in high school, no one ever exposed me to the tech careers that were out there for me. Joining IGNITE was a way for me to give some of the girls what I hadn't had and maybe help keep them from making some of the mistakes that I had made.

Each month, about twenty girls visit our campus and ten Microsoft women meet with them. We have lunch and talk about whatever the girls want to talk about. They see us as individuals with hobbies and passions, willing to answer their questions. It is always so much fun.

Technology jobs are not marketed as sexy and fun for women, but I have done so many fun things at work. I have been in cutting-edge technologies, met interesting people, and traveled to fascinating places. I've been to Paris three times, to Ireland, and all over the United States. I have spoken in front of thousands of people about what Microsoft is doing. Technology is not just coding; it is also sales, marketing, and customer engagement. IGNITE is really awesome because we get to tell the girls all about these exciting things.

There is a stereotype of what a Microsoft woman looks like. We're nerds and geeks who wear T-shirts to work. But that is not it at all. We are normal women—we love to shop and do all the things women do, including racing motorcycles, like I do. As a woman in technology, you can still be fashionable, be feminine, and have the money that gives you the power to do what you really like.

Many of us as women have knocked the doors down, but there is no one coming through. A lot of battles have been waged for equal pay, which we are so close to getting. We need the girls to keep coming. There are so many opportunities for them. I don't want them to give up.

🔥 Martha Flores

University of Washington

As a freshman in high school, I felt isolated and alone. One, I needed to travel farther than most to go to high school. The school near my home didn't have a music program and, as a musician, I needed one. And second, I saw very few students who looked like me or had my exotic Latin heritage. I felt both invisible and as conspicuous as a splotch of ink on a clean white shirt.

Being shy and uncertain, lunchtimes were the worst. It seemed that everyone had a place to go, or at least one or two people to be with. To keep myself from thinking about my isolation, I started walking. It was during one of those walks that I saw a gathering at the career center and smelled pizza coming from that general vicinity. I decided to check it out. The career center specialist invited me in to a Presentation by women about their careers in technology. While the pizza satisfied my hunger, hearing the stories began to change my mind about my isolation.

Martha Flores

"When you have a support group like IGNITE, you realize that you are not alone, and in high school that is so important. IGNITE is for girls, just girls, and it opens doors for every one of us."

The stories of the women from Cisco and Microsoft who become successful despite their struggles being the only women in male-dominated fields reminded me of my own struggles to fit in at Ballard. My first thought was "Wow, they are just like me." I was inspired by how they were able to work through their obstacles and succeed.

At the end of the Presentation, they talked about a field trip to Microsoft and I decided to go. I figured that a day away from school would be fun. Having fun wasn't the reason I joined and stayed with IGNITE, though. No, my staying can be credited to Cathi and the network of other women I met through the program. They gave me hope and a sense of belonging for the first time.

I transferred from Ballard to Franklin High after one of my teachers made me feel awkward and unwelcome. While the school was closer to home, I still was only one of a few Latina students. Meeting more girls and women though IGNITE helped me tolerate and finish high school.

Then IGNITE did something even more remarkable for me. Something I never expected. I knew from my parents' situation that we could not afford college. At the end of high school, the plan was for me to go find work and contribute to the family income. Most of the IGNITE women I met, however, worked and went to college. This gave me a great deal of hope and comfort.

Now I am a student at the University of Washington, double majoring in English and Latin American Studies and considering a possible switch to a creative major like photography. When I do switch majors, I'm still planning on double majoring; I'm just not sure yet which combination of majors will work best for me. I also work part-time, fitting my work around my school schedule; and during the summer of 2006, I taught workshop classes in Spanish Golden Age Literature.

Having participated in IGNITE all through high school, I have many IGNITE memories that I treasure. My favorite experience was being part of the IGNITE video. We spent lots of hours together over two hectic but fun days where I made so many good friends. Two of them go to the UW with me. And I was the MC for the premiere party! My IGNITE memories of being around people with the same interests and having fun are so wonderful. Not everyone in the group went into technology, but I lived through IGNITE with them and, to this day, it is one of the best experiences of my life.

To those of you who do not want to join IGNITE or participate in its events because you are not interested in technology, my advice is to just try one event. Then, if you still don't like technology and want nothing to do with IGNITE, you'll have a better understanding of why. IGNITE isn't just about computers or technology; it is about making connections. To this day, I still have the cards of the businesswomen I met in IGNITE and have remained in touch with some of the girls in my IGNITE group. I can't emphasize how fun it is to meet so many cool and interesting people.

One of the people that I met through IGNITE was in my math class. We had seen each other in class, but never really talked until IGNITE. I found out that she and I had a lot in common, including feeling unsure in a room of smart boys who always seemed to have the answers. It felt good to have her and others around me that felt the same way I did, even though we didn't look alike at all and came from totally different backgrounds. When you have a support group like IGNITE, you realize that you are not alone, and in high school that is so important. IGNITE is for girls, just girls, and it opens doors for every one of us. In the future, I am totally open to being a mentor for IGNITE so I can give back a little of what IGNITE has given to me.

🔥 Maureen "Mo" Rozenhart

1st Volunteer of IGNITE
Network Engineer, T-Mobile

What do being a Harley Biker chick, a high-level certified network engineer, a teenage runaway, and an artist all have in common? They are all parts of my life story. Family issues and my "take charge" attitude toward life had me leaving home when I was seventeen. It was that same attitude that helped me compete for jobs that girls didn't normally compete for and fall into programs that earned me top-level certifications as a Cisco Systems network engineer. I believe that good girls get angry about not getting opportunities, and I just wanted to be where the men were because I knew I was just as good as they were yet they were the ones getting the kinds of jobs and perks that I wanted.

Maureen "Mo" Rozenhart
"I have learned that we are all here to help each other. If you just offer a hand, you can really make a difference."

I was working at Cisco when Cathi Rodgveller asked me to come to a high school in Seattle and talk about my experiences. Intrigued by Cathi's idea that sharing my life story would somehow impact a few young girls' lives, I jumped at the idea. I had already been a volunteer for Big Sisters, but I wanted to do more than what those one-on-one relationships allowed.

That first day was both exhausting and exhilarating because I had to address six separate classes. The first two were an interesting mix of boys and girls. Some girls would strut for the boys while others were unfocused or inattentive. When it came time for questions, all of the girls were strangely quiet, leaving the boys to run that part of the show.

During the break between the second and third classes, I pulled Cathi aside and we discussed what had happened. We decided that the last four presentations would be girls only. I was absolutely shocked by the difference that made. The girls were more focused, attentive, and engaged, and asked lots of questions. That experience confirmed my belief that we had a shot at making a real and significant difference in the lives of many girls.

I volunteered that first day, and have stayed involved with IGNITE since, because if we can help just one of these girls get a better job or career and realize that they are just as good as the boys are, that

makes me happy. My life since that day has taken many turns, but I've always found the time to stop in at a school and relate my story to the girls.

The girls are absolutely awesome. Every time I see one blossom, it just blows me away. This happened with one particular student named Candy Chiang, and the experience changed both our lives.

Candy was in high school and working part-time as a bank teller. Her mother thought that this was a reasonable job with a stable future, and while Candy really didn't want to do the job, she knew it was helping to support her immigrant family. When I first met Candy, she was really quiet and shy, but I could sense that she had some fight in her. We met after-hours where I worked at Cisco, and I taught her about networks. I was also able to offer her business and career advice, helping her to make decisions about what she wanted to do with her life. Eventually, Candy got her Cisco Certified Network Administration Certification, went on to internships with Microsoft, and has been offered full-time work at Microsoft even before graduating from college.

I love IGNITE because it not only has made a difference in the lives of girls like Candy, but it has helped me in my own life as well. It's softened some of my rougher edges. Running away at seventeen, I had to build up some walls to survive. But through IGNITE, I have learned that we are all here to help each other. If you just offer a hand, you can really make a difference. Time and time again, IGNITE gives me the opportunity to reach out to girls who are struggling.

IGNITE is important because it tells girls that they matter and should never consider backing down from something that they truly want. That it is okay to be who they are and do something different from everyone else.

🔥 Raelene Sanders

Network Engineer, Microsoft
Pierce County IGNITE Coordinator

When I was in high school, my mom told me to take a typing class. She figured that no matter what happened, I could always earn a living as a secretary. Turns out that following my mom's advice helped me find my way into a well-paying job in technology. I was working as a secretary while attending community college when a man came in to meet with my boss. Stopping by my desk, the man asked me if I was going to be a secretary for the rest of my life.

"No way," I responded.

He then invited me to take an entry test for an electronics technician program. The graduates of this program, he said, could be part of the team building the Space Shuttle at Vandenberg Air Force Base. I sat for the aptitude test, along with only four other women and 145 men. Thirty-two of us scored high enough to qualify for the course. Of those, only 13 graduated and I was one of them. From that point on, I have worked in technology.

Raelene Sanders
"Now, if I leave with just one girl saying thank you after an event, I am happy. To know that I'm making a difference in somebody's life is so rewarding."

Initially I was hired by Boeing to work on Minuteman Missiles. During my time at Boeing, I took every opportunity and tackled every challenge that came my way. I believe in never saying no to anything and being open to all possibilities. This attitude led to several promotions, a return to college where I graduated with a BA in Business, and an eventual switch from Boeing to Microsoft.

While my career was taking off, I was also a passionate and committed volunteer in the community. So when I learned about IGNITE and what it did at Microsoft, I volunteered to help with a number of their events. It was during these events that I learned firsthand about the power IGNITE has to inspire girls about technology. I wanted the same kind of inspiration for the girls in my own community because my daughter would soon be attending high school. Only one slight problem—IGNITE was still only available in the Seattle area.

I wasn't deterred. Instead, I asked Cathi, IGNITE's founder, for her help in starting the Pierce County chapter of IGNITE. We did. And now, if I leave with just one girl saying thank you after an event, I am happy. To know that I'm making a difference in somebody's life is so rewarding.

🔥 Vicky Ho
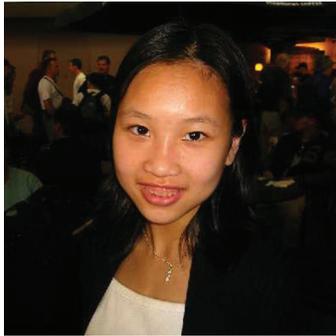
Vicky Ho

"It was the women and all my IGNITE experiences that helped me travel the path from high school through college and into my career."

University of Washington, B.S in Geography Info. Systems Software Engineer, Expedia Inc.

I arrived in the United States from Vietnam at the age of ten, unable to speak English. Adjusting to the culture shock, I spent my first years in this country in ESL classes, trying to catch up with my peers. By high school, I excelled in English and my interest in technology was apparent to all who met me. In fact, I took full advantage of the opportunity to learn networking through the Cisco Academy at Ingraham High School.

When the teachers at Cisco Academy introduced me to IGNITE, I jumped at the chance to be involved, knowing that it would lead to a visit to Microsoft. In fact, I hate to admit it, but I probably spent more time at Microsoft than any other IGNITE student. That's just the way I am. I take advantage of every opportunity that comes my way. And it was all those opportunities—from mentors to job shadowing to conferences and internships—that introduced me to high-tech careers I might not have thought of. I really appreciate being exposed to a variety of people and learning how they made it to where they are.

Job shadowing really inspired me. IGNITE provides a lot of real-world experience. I would encourage girls to get involved with IGNITE, even if they are not interested in technology. No matter what career they choose, they will need the experience and support that IGNITE provides. IGNITE teaches you a lot about how people work, how demanding the work environment is, and how to stay competitive. Any high school student needs to understand these things to be successful in the world.

What IGNITE does really, really well is networking and mentoring. One of my mentors, Justine, has been very inspirational. She has provided a lot of guidance in my life and my career. I met her when I was in high school and we have kept in touch since then. She helped just before college graduation when I was having a rough time trying to decide what company to work with. It is great to have a mentor like this.

Now that I have my college degree and my first job, I plan on staying actively involved with IGNITE. Perhaps I'll mentor a high school student as I reconnect with more of the IGNITE women who inspired me. It was those women and all my IGNITE experiences that helped me travel the path from high school through college and into my career, so it's only right that I give direction to those who are following behind me.

🔥 Section 8

Appendix

"In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility."

— Eleanor Roosevelt
Former First Lady

🔥 Organization and Use of the Appendix

The pages that follow contain all the support documents—letters, checklists, templates, handouts, etc.—needed to organize and manage an active IGNITE chapter. They are grouped by Toolkit section, coded with a brief reference to both section and content, and cross-referenced in blue in the text itself.

Virtually every document needs some modification for local chapter use. This is easily accomplished by using the electronic documents in the Resource section of the IGNITE website. Most documents are preceded with a brief explanatory page, and text areas requiring local chapter input or modification are printed in brown. Once a document has been modified, all the text should be black. For your own convenience, be sure to save the modified docs in a separate chapter file for use later.

Note: Before printing or sending, always read the final document out loud to ensure that all necessary changes have been made and that the ideas and sentences flow smoothly.

Another advantage of the electronic documents is their versatility. The registration form and volunteer questionnaire will be available at ignite-us.org. Other documents that might be more effective as e-mails can easily be pasted or attached. Our goal is to take as much work out of your job as possible so you will remain energized and eager to create more IGNITE events.

🔥 2.6 Media

2.6/press - Press Release

Template for keeping the media informed of IGNITE events.

2.6/stu.release - Student Release

This form gives you the right to publish and use pictures and quotes in print or on the web. Without a signed release, you can not use a person's picture, even in a group shot.

IGNITE
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In Technology Evolution

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Date

Contact:
Name
Address
Phone Number
E-mail Address

LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL INVITES GIRLS TO FIRST IGNITE PRESENTATION (*INSPIRING GIRLS NOW IN TECHNOLOGY EVOLUTION)*

IGNITE is changing the way girls look at technology.

The U.S. government issues over 65,000 visas every year to import specialized talent such as scientists, engineers and programmers. One reason might be that, despite the tremendous growth of technology over the last two decades, the number of girls and young women pursuing training and careers in high-tech fields has remained very low. Name of High School is launching the IGNITE (Inspiring Girls Now In Technology Evolution) program in our community on date with women from company names speaking to girls at school name in town at time and place in hopes of changing that trend. *(Modify this paragraph to suit your needs – press releases can be used for all types of IGNITE news.)*

For more information about the IGNITE program, visit ignite-us.org; for details related to the upcoming event, contact Name at local contact information.

About IGNITE
Pioneered in the Seattle School District in 2000, IGNITE has successfully and dramatically increased the numbers of girls signing up for technology classes in high school and continuing in technology-oriented programs in college. IGNITE's process is simple, and its power to inspire is now well documented. IGNITE recruits women in technology and engineering careers to tell their stories to high school girls. Through personal presentations, field trips, job shadows and other events, girls meet women whose stories inspire hope, expand possibilities, and lend support to girls at a critical time in their lives.

IGNITE
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Photo/Interview Release & Waiver

I, _____, do hereby give IGNITE or its authorized agents, licensees, and legal representatives the right to use my name and picture, portrait, or photograph in all forms and media and in all manners, including composite or distorted representations, for advertising, trade, or any other lawful purposes, in conjunction with IGNITE programs. Furthermore, I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished version(s), including written copy that may be created in connection therewith.

To the extent that I have been interviewed, I also give my permission to use the results of that interview along with my name in any manner noted above.

I have read this release and understand its contents.

For children under 18 years of age

I, _____, the parent or guardian of the above named, affirm that I have legal authority to execute this release. I approve of my child's participation in this endeavor under the conditions listed above.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Date: _____

🔥 3.2 Chapter Registration

3.2/reg

A chapter registration form is required for all new chapters. This helps the women at IGNITE World-wide get to know all the affiliate chapters, and the contact information is posted on the website so that local chapters can network easily. Even if not entirely complete, the form should be filled out as soon as a chapter is organized. The registration form is found on the website, ignite-us.org.

Note: An annual membership fee will be required after your registration is filed. Information regarding the current amount and methods of payment can be found at ignite-us.org.

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Chapter Registration

Complete the form to the best of your ability and don't worry if you don't have all the specifics regarding your first presentation. We are looking more for what motivated you to start the chapter and how to contact you so we can offer whatever support you may need.

School/Org Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Purpose/motivation for starting the chapter:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Primary contact person for this chapter

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone number: _____

Fax number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Secondary contact person

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone number: _____

Fax number: _____

E-mail address: _____

First Presentation Info

Estimated Date: _____

Location: _____

_____

Speakers and/or companies represented:

_____

_____

_____

_____

🔥 3.3 Budget & Fundraising

3.3/budget - Budget Worksheet

A simple chart for tracking expenses

3.3/$req - Donation Request

This letter is one of the keys to your chapter's success because it helps generate funding from individuals who have either expressed a specific interest in IGNITE or are known to support this type of organization. People with high interest and little time are often happy to donate as their only way of showing support. Always keep this letter updated with current facts relevant to your particular community and need.

3.3/$thx - Thank You Letter

Common sense says that after someone gives you something, it's always good to thank them. This is especially true in fundraising.

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Budget Worksheet

The budget worksheet lets you see at a glance where you are spending the most money.

Date of expenditure

Quantity: the number of items (**3** binders) or people (bus for **30** girls) and the appropriate unit - each, box, hour (for rentals), etc.

Category: the type of event or item purchased. Keep your categories consistent and understandable. Possible categories include field trip/transportation, Presentation/food, printing, general supplies, etc.

Description: brief but complete description (for example, write *large pizzas*, not just *food*)

Price/Unit: (be sure the unit is the same as stated in column 2)

Total Cost: (column 2 x column 5)

Date	Qty	Category	Brief but Specific Description	Unit Price	Total Cost

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Donation Request

<div align="right">
Chapter Name
Address
City, State Zip
</div>

Name of Potential Donor
Company Name
Company Address
City, State, Zip

Date of Letter

Dear Name,

Did you know that the US government issues over 65,000 visas every year to import specialized talent such as scientists, engineers and programmers? Did you know that the number of girls earning degrees in computer science has shown a steady decline over most of the last two decades?

The IGNITE program can change that. Pioneered in the Seattle School district in 2000 by Cathi Rodgveller, IGNITE has successfully and dramatically increased the numbers of girls signing up for technology classes in high school and going on to college in technology-oriented programs. IGNITE's process is simple, and its power to inspire is now well documented by repeated success in Seattle. IGNITE recruits women in technology and engineering careers to mentor high school girls. Through presentations, field trips, job shadows and other events, girls meet women whose stories inspire hope, expand possibilities, and lend support to girls at a critical time in their lives. Listen to what IGNITE girls have to say:

> *"IGNITE helped me choose a career and then the courses I needed to get there. You look at a job and then think, how do I get there? There are so many different ways. So, by meeting the women and hearing what they did, the courses they took in college and some of their mistakes or shortcuts, I'm learning." - Kelly E*

> *"I knew from my parents' situation, that we could not afford college. At the end of high school, I was just going to go out to work and contribute to the family income. But most of the IGNITE women I met worked AND went to college. I realized I could do the same thing. They gave me hope by showing me that, with a little extra effort, I could do it too." - Martha F*

> *"It is so cool to spend a few hours shadowing someone to see what they do. I was surprised how plausible a career in technology was for me. To see women so young, it made me realize that age didn't matter. I was so excited to be doing this and felt more driven than I have been in my whole life." - Lani B*

"I met with some of the deaf workers. I am always inspired by people who make breakthroughs. It was great to meet them and say to myself, I could be one of those people and do something great with my work too." - Christie O, deaf student

We have started an IGNITE chapter here in our community to provide these same inspirational opportunities for the girls at School Name(s). IGNITE is a collaborative, community effort and we need your help. Your donation of amount will help provide briefly explain what that amount will cover (e.g. bus transportation for 30 girls) so that we can continue to unite young girls with women and provide the inspiration these girls need to succeed.

If you need more information about IGNITE, please visit ignite-us.org or call me, your name, at your phone number or e-mail me at your email address. Thank you.

Sincerely,

your name
Chapter Coordinator
name of your school/org

IGNITE
Inspiring Girls Now
In Technology Evolution

Thank You Letter

Chapter Name
Address
City, State Zip

Donor's Name
Company Name
Company Address
City, State, Zip

Date of Letter

Dear Name of Donor,

Thank you for your generous gift of amount to help us build a successful IGNITE program in our community. Your support will help us provide experiences for high school girls to learn about careers in technology and engineering. With your donation, we are able to provide specific example of what the donation will cover.

If you would like to your donation in action, we invite you to attend our next event, list event date, time & location. Come experience the magic that IGNITE creates and see how important your support is to the future of the individual girls and our community as a whole. If you can not attend, please visit our chapter webpage at ignite-us.org as we update it with news and events on a regular basis.

If you would like to attend the next scheduled event, please call me, your name, at your phone number or e-mail me at your email address and I will ensure that your name is on the invitation list.

Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

your name
Chapter Coordinator
your school name

🔥 3.4 Volunteers

IGNITE is only as good as the volunteers who help us. Please have all your volunteers fill out the questionnaire. This benefits both them and you. It helps potential volunteers by showing them, through the questions asked, the types of activities and events they might be involved in. It helps you to screen and organize your volunteers by the answers they provide. Once events are scheduled, the sign-up letter provides the first round of commitments.

3.4/commID - Community Resource Identifier
Worksheet to brainstorm and list potential volunteers.

3.4/VQ - Volunteer Questionnaire
The questionnaire provides lots of background and contact information for each volunteer. Keep copies available at every event. For added convenience, this form is also posted at ignite-us.org. Whenever a volunteer chooses the online form, however, you must remember to confirm its completion and download the information.

3.4/sign-up - Volunteer Sign-Up
At the beginning of the school year, after you have confirmed all the dates of various events, you need to send this letter out to your volunteers so they can sign up for the events they are most interested in. In some cases, it may be more expedient to send this as an e-mail or e-mail attachment.

Note: If you are sending this form at some other time of year (for example, the beginning of the second semester), you will need to make simple changes in the first 3 sentences.

You will notice that this form is almost entirely blue text. That's because this is *your* chapter's events schedule, which is not the same as any other chapter's schedule. A few helpful hints:

1) If no one has previously committed to a particular event, delete the line. This simplifies the form and makes it easier to use.

2) Do *not* delete the "Items of Interest" line. It is important to identify a couple highlights of the event (well-known keynote speaker, especially interesting workshop topic, etc.) to help volunteers choose events they have a real interest in.

3) Remember… when you are finished, no blue text should remain.

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Community Resource Identifier

This worksheet is meant as brainstorming tool. Use it to help you find and identify:

- People interested in doing Presentations

- Schools interested in Presentations and field trips

- People interested in coordinating IGNITE activities (field trips, Presentations, job shadows, etc.)

- Companies and organizations (and the people involved with them) who would provide the locations for the field trips and job shadows

While you're thinking of people and organizations, think of:

- Major businesses of any type

- Councils, associations, and unions

- Government agencies

- Non-profit organizations and foundations

- Civic groups

- Schools of all types (colleges & universities, technical schools, community & junior colleges, public & private high schools)

- Media outlets (newspapers, radio stations, television stations, book & magazine publishers)

- Small business owners and self-employed people in technical fields (web design, graphic design, database management, web hosting, engineering, etc.)

People interested in doing Presentations

_____

_____

_____

_____

Schools interested in field trips and presentations

_____

_____

_____

_____

People interested in coordinating IGNITE activities (field trips, presentations, job shadows, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Companies and other organizations (and the people involved with them) who will provide destinations for field trips and job shadows

company/organization: _____
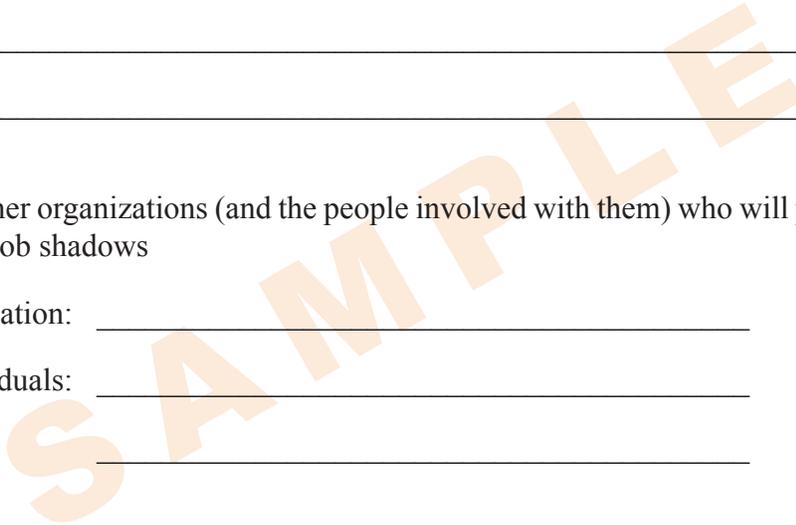
individuals: _____

_____

_____

company/organization: _____

individuals: _____

_____

_____

company/organization: _____

individuals: _____

_____

_____

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Volunteer Questionnaire

Be sure each volunteer fills this out!

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

_____

Cell Phone: _____

Home Phone: _____

Home E-mail: _____

Employer: _____

Job Title: _____

Work Address: _____

_____

Work Phone: _____

Work E-mail: _____

What is the best way to reach you?

☐ Home Phone   Best time to call: _____

☐ Cell Phone

☐ Work Phone

☐ Home E-mail

☐ Work E-mail

What e-mail address would you prefer that we use to contact you with official IGNITE communications (event reminders, chapter updates and communications, schedule confirmations, messages from the national chapter, etc.)

    ☐   Home

    ☐   Work

    ☐   Other   _____

What e-mail address would you prefer our members (students and your fellow volunteers) use for you

    ☐   Home

    ☐   Work

    ☐   Other   _____

May we post your member contact e-mail on our web site?

    ☐   Yes

    ☐   No

Do you have a fax?

    ☐   Yes   Fax number: _____

    ☐   No

Why are you volunteering for IGNITE?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are you interested in doing? Please check all that apply.

☐ Speaking at a Presentation
☐ Facilitating an event
☐ Being a personal mentor
☐ Mentoring a job shadow
☐ Internships
☐ Industry field trips
☐ College visits
☐ Workshops and/or seminars
☐ Fundraising
☐ General event planning
☐ Scholarships
☐ Networking (schools, industry, community, business contacts)
☐ Providing IT & creative services (graphics, web design, etc.)
☐ Support "behind the scenes" (phone calls, paperwork, ordering food, etc.)
☐ Other: _____

Please tell us a little about the skills and experience that you would bring to the chapter.

_____

_____

_____

_____

How much time can you commit to volunteering?

☐ 1 to 2 times a week
☐ 2 times a month
☐ Once a month
☐ Once every _____ months
☐ Once a year
☐ Other: _____

When can you volunteer?

    ☐ Lunchtime

    ☐ Evenings

    ☐ Weekends

    ☐ Other: _____

Background/Career Information for Website Biography

Your story helps create IGNITE's heartbeat. We would like to post information about you on our website so that girls can meet you even before they see you in person at an IGNITE event. Along with the information below, please provide us with a digital photo that captures your personality. If you do not have a digital photo, you can mail us a hard copy, which we'll scan and return to you. The following questions will be used to build your on-line biography and a short introduction for use at events.

How long have you been in technology?

_____

Briefly describe your career path.

_____

_____

_____

_____

How did you choose your current job?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How did you learn what you "do"? On the job? Self-taught? Through school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Who do you work with most often? (clients, team members, supervisors, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

What three strengths or skills are most needed to excel in a high-tech or engineering career?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Please list any websites you would recommend for the students involved with IGNITE.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you have any ideas for articles for the IGNITE website? _____

Would you be interested in writing any of these articles? _____

If you have article ideas, please list them below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What advice would you give a person about making their dreams come true?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Any final thoughts?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Volunteer Sign-Up

Date (not needed if this is sent as an e-mail)

Dear Name of Volunteer,

I hope everyone had a great summer. I am so excited to launch our IGNITE year with all of you. Below is the IGNITE events schedule for this year. Please check your calendars and let me know the events that you would like to participate in. Thank you.

Presentations: *Please check the dates you would like to participate.*

____ Date at School   already committed: list names of anyone who has already volunteered

____ Date at School   already committed: as above

Field Trips: *This is a 2-step process.. For chapter purposes, please check the events you plan to participate in. Then be sure to contact the organization liaison person named in bold type.*

____ Date at Company **contact person:** Name **at** contact info

              already committed: as above

Items of Interest: "Company" is a great place to work – and you don't have to be a biology whiz to enjoy the view, the camaraderie, or the employee perks. The focus of this trip is on the wealth of tech-related support positions available here.

____ Date at Company **contact person:** Name **at** contact info

              already committed: as above

Items of Interest: "Company" is a great place to work – and you don't have to be a biology whiz to enjoy the view, the camaraderie, or the employee perks. The focus of this trip is on the wealth of tech-related support positions available here.

Conferences: *Again, check the events you want to participate in and then contact the organization liaison.*

___ Date at Company **contact person:** Name **at** contact info

> already committed: as above

Items of Interest: "Company" is a great place to work – and you don't have to be a biology whiz to enjoy the view, the camaraderie, or the employee perks. The focus of this trip is on the wealth of tech-related support positions available here.

___ Date at Company **contact person:** Name **at** contact info

> already committed: as above

Items of Interest: "Company" is a great place to work – and you don't have to be a biology whiz to enjoy the view, the camaraderie, or the employee perks. The focus of this trip is on the wealth of tech-related support positions available here.

Other Events: *Just check whatever you are interested in.*

___ Event - Date at Location

> already committed: list names of anyone who has already volunteered

___ Event - Date at Location

> already committed: list names of anyone who has already volunteered

Please get this information back to me as soon as possible so we can see where we still have gaps to fill. As soon as I receive your response, I will send more detailed information relevant to the events you have chosen.

Thanks, everyone, for your interest and support.

Your Name
E-mail address

🔥 5.1 Presentations – Planning & Prep

Presentations are the heart and soul of IGNITE. Especially in the beginning, planning and preparation for these events can seem overwhelming. Complete instructions for preparation are found in Section 5.1.

5.1/Pchk - Presentation Checklist

The checklist provides an easy way to track your progress.

5.1/spkrID - Speaker Identification

This letter is a public relations tool as well as an aid in identifying and securing Presentation speakers. Like the fundraising letter, it should be updated regularly with current facts and events relevant to your particular community and need.

5.1/invite - Speaker Invitation

This letter, sent directly to women who have previously volunteered or been identified as potential Presentation speakers, represents another personal contact vital to your chapter's success.

5.1/spkr.prep - Speaker Preparation

List of questions for speakers to consider.

5.1/conf.info - Speaker Confirmation

Speaker confirmation with directions and other information.

5.1/flyer - Presentation Flyer

Flyer to advertise Presentation within the school.

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Presentation Checklist

General Planning and Logistics (1-3 months ahead of time)

- ☐ Set date
- ☐ Secure appropriate location (library, auditorium, etc.)
- ☐ Check with the person who keeps the master calendar to prevent double booking, conflicts with other events, or the possibility of disrupting events in adjacent areas
- ☐ If necessary, contact Human Resources to identify potential speakers [5.1/spkrID].
- ☐ Send letter of invitation [5.1/invite] to potential speakers.
- ☐ Call speaker(s) to confirm date, time, and availability.
- ☐ Send questions to help speaker prepare [5.1/spkr.prep].
- ☐ Advertise Presentations to students [5.1/flyer].
- ☐ Create and post sign-up sheets.
- ☐ Secure passes for students, if the presentation will make them late for their next period.
- ☐ Obtain help and collaboration from administration, teachers, and career center staff.
- ☐ Prepare evaluation forms [5.2/Peval].
- ☐ Coordinate with custodial staff for equipment needs and room set-up requirements.
- ☐ Prepare lists of classes, technical certification, and other relevant educational opportunities available at your school or the local community college.
- ☐ Secure a digital camera and one volunteer to take pictures during the Presentation for later posting on the website.
- ☐ Prepare a list of speakers and their contact information.
- ☐ If this is a lunch presentation, coordinate food ordering, delivery, and cleanup.

Week or Two Ahead (week of _____)

- ☐ Send/e-mail confirmation letter [5.1/conf.info] to speakers; this letter includes directions to the event location and other pertinent information.
- ☐ Check to be sure you have either collected (or at least sent) the Volunteer Questionnaire [5.1/VQ] to speakers. If necessary, remind them that you would like this returned before the event if possible, and no later than the day of the event.
- ☐ Re-confirm all equipment and equipment operator needs. Don't forget the event photographer.
- ☐ Re-confirm food orders and delivery instructions.

☐ If necessary, coordinate with volunteers to meet and escort speaker(s) the day of the presentation. Make sure they have enough information to answer speaker questions and allay any last minute concerns.

<u>Day of Presentation</u> (date: _____)

☐ Check room set-up.

☐ Ensure all equipment is in working order and that someone present knows how to use it.

☐ Post volunteers at the entry door to distribute One-Sheets [5.2/1-sheet] and blank paper for questions. Place evaluation forms at each seat.

☐ Remind volunteers that they will be needed at the end to collect evaluations and pass out class passes.

☐ If necessary, be sure facilitator has a copy of the Information & Reminders sheet [5.2/facil].

☐ If food is being served, be sure you have adequate help to oversee and clean up.

<u>Days Following</u> (no later than _____)

☐ Read and record evaluations.

☐ Send a thank you to each speaker.

☐ Write report [**5.3/rpt**] and send it to your chapter list-serve.

☐ Post report and digital pictures to your chapter web pages.

☐ Meet with collaborators/volunteers to evaluate successes and challenges.

<u>Remember</u>

Detailed explanations for planning, hosting, and following up a Presentation event are found in Sections 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3, respectively.

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Speaker Identification

Chapter Name
Address
City, State Zip

Name of HR Manager (call company if necessary)

Correct title for above individual
Company Name
Company Address
City, State, Zip

Date of Letter

Dear Name of HR Manager,

Did you know that the US government issues over 65,000 visas every year to import specialized talent such as scientists, engineers and programmers? Did you know that the number of girls earning degrees in computer science has shown a steady decline over most of the last two decades?

Do you want to help change this trend? You can, and it's easier than you think. We are looking for volunteers to come to our schools and tell their stories to young girls. By giving up a few hours of their time, they may make a difference in many girls' lives.

Pioneered in the Seattle School District in 2000 by Cathi Rodgveller, IGNITE has successfully and dramatically increased the numbers of girls signing up for technology classes in high school and going on to college in technology-oriented programs. IGNITE's process is simple, and its power to inspire is now well documented by repeated success in Seattle. IGNITE recruits women in technology and engineering careers to mentor high school girls. Through presentations, field trips, job shadows and other events, girls meet women who they can identify with in some way and whose words inspire hope, expand possibilities and lend support to girls at a critical time in their lives.

Listen to what IGNITE girls say:

"IGNITE helped me choose a career and then the courses I needed to get there. You look at a job and then think, how do I get there? There are so many different ways. So, by meeting the women and hearing what they did, the courses they took in college and some of their mistakes or shortcuts, I'm learning." - Kelly E

"I knew from my parents' situation, that we could not afford college. At the end of high school, I was just going to go out to work and contribute to the family income. But most of the IGNITE

women I met worked AND went to college. I realized I could do the same thing. They gave me hope by showing me with a little extra effort, I could do it too."   *- Martha F*

"It is so cool to spend a few hours shadowing someone to see what they do. I was surprised how plausible a career in technology was for me. To see women so young, it made me realize that age didn't matter. I was so excited to be doing this and felt more driven than I have been in my whole life." - Lani B

"I met with some of the deaf workers. I am always inspired by people who make breakthroughs. It was great to meet them and say to myself, I could be one of those people and do something great with my work too." - Christie O, deaf student

We have started an IGNITE chapter here in our community to provide these same inspirational opportunities for the girls at School Name(s). IGNITE is a collaborative, community program and we need your help. To begin presentations, we need women who will agree to simply tell their stories—their personal journeys from high school to their current positions, each told in about ten minutes. That's all it takes to get girls excited about technology. It's hard to explain how the magic happens, but after six years we know it does. *If you know women in your company who might be willing to share these stories, we ask you to share their names with us* (with their permission, of course)**.** Most women who have participated so far find the experience energizing as well as rewarding and continue to support IGNITE long after they tell that first story.

If you need further information, please visit ignite-us.org or call me, your name, at your phone number or e-mail me at your email address.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

your name
Chapter Coordinator
your school/chapter name

IGNITE
Inspiring Girls Now
In Technology Evolution

Speaker Invitation

Chapter Name
Address
City, State Zip

Potential Speaker's Name
Company Name
Company Address
City, State, Zip

Date of Letter

Dear Name of Potential Speaker,

Did you know that the US government issues over 65,000 visas every year to import specialized talent such as scientists, engineers and programmers? Did you know that the number of girls earning degrees in computer science has shown a steady decline over most of the last two decades?

Do you want to help change this trend? You can, and it's easier than you think. We are looking for volunteers to come to our schools and tell their stories to young girls. By giving up a few hours of your time, you may make a difference in someone's life.

Pioneered in the Seattle School District in 2000 by Cathi Rodgveller, IGNITE has successfully and dramatically increased the numbers of girls signing up for technology classes in high school and going on to college in technology-oriented programs. IGNITE's process is simple, and its power to inspire is now well documented by repeated success in Seattle. IGNITE recruits women in technology and engineering careers to mentor high school girls. Through presentations, field trips, job shadows and other events, girls meet women who they can identify with in some way and whose words inspire hope, expand possibilities and lend support to girls at a critical time in their lives.

Listen to what IGNITE girls say:

"IGNITE helped me choose a career and then the courses I needed to get there. You look at a job and then think, how do I get there? There are so many different ways. So, by meeting the women and hearing what they did, the courses they took in college and some of their mistakes or shortcuts, I'm learning." - Kelly E

"I knew from my parents' situation, that we could not afford college. At the end of high school, I was just going to go out to work and contribute to the family income. But most of the IGNITE women I met worked AND went to college. I realized I could do the same thing. They gave me hope by showing me with a little extra effort, I could do it too." - Martha F

"It is so cool to spend a few hours shadowing someone to see what they do. I was surprised how plausible a career in technology was for me. To see women so young, it made me realize that age didn't matter. I was so excited to be doing this and felt more driven than I have been in my whole life." - Lani B

"I met with some of the deaf workers. I am always inspired by people who make breakthroughs. It was great to meet them and say to myself, I could be one of those people and do something great with my work too." - Christie O, deaf student

We have started an IGNITE chapter here in our community to provide these same inspirational opportunities for the girls at School Name(s). IGNITE is a collaborative, community program and we need your help. To begin presentations, we need women who will agree to simply tell their stories—your personal journey from high school to your current position, told in about ten minutes. That's all it takes. After you've participated you'll understand how the magic works; the first time you just have to go on faith. But we've been doing this for six years, and we know it works. Your story, other stories, questions and discussion. It's powerful. Please join us.

If you need further information or just want to explore the opportunity a bit more, please visit ignite-us.org or call me, your name, at your phone number or e-mail me at your email address. Thank you.

Sincerely,

your name
Chapter Coordinator
your chapter name

IGNITE
Inspiring Girls Now
In Technology Evolution

Speaker Preparation

During a Presentation, each speaker tells her story for approximately 10 minutes, explaining:

- Her background (starting with the teenage years)

- How she got where she is (education, various jobs, likes/dislikes)

- What she does now

- The struggles, obstacles, and mistakes made along the way and how she learned from each of those

To help prepare each speaker for her presentation, you need to call them and ask them a few questions. These questions will reassure the speaker that she does have a story to tell and help her identify parts of her story that she wants to share with the girls. You may want to e-mail the questions to the speaker before the phone conversation, if that makes them more comfortable. But definitely send them afterwards, to serve as reminders or guidelines for the speaker's story.

During any pre-Presentation conversation, let the speaker know that telling her story honestly—not hiding the difficulties and not exaggerating the benefits—will make the stories most compelling. Teenagers appreciate honesty and are more willing to respond when they know the story is genuine. Also, when asking questions, make sure you ask about challenges in general ***before*** asking specifically about gender-related challenges. This helps the speaker understand that you are looking for both a general overview of the technology field as well as the specifics of her own personal story.

Questions to Consider in Planning a Presentation Story

- What were you like in high school?

- How did you decide what you would study in college?

- What obstacles did you face along the way? How did you overcome them?

- What is your career now?

- What is exciting to you about that career?

- What advice would you like to share with the girls that you wish you knew when you were in high school?

🔥 5.1 Speaker/Vendor Confirmation and Information Letter

5.1/conf.info

The purpose of this letter is to confirm participation of speakers and vendors and provide event location details. The letter is structured so that it can be used for any type of event (presentation, field trip, conference, job shadow, etc). Only a skeletal format is provided, as nearly all the information is specific to each chapter and event.

Lead paragraph: The first paragraph is used to thank the speaker/vendor, confirm the date and time of the event, and provide other relevant details. In this case, the specific purpose is to help them find the event and know what to expect when they arrive at the event location (security procedures, parking restrictions, etc.).

Directions: Here you will give directions to the location. With the letter you can always include a map. MapQuest, Yahoo Maps!, and MSN Maps & Directions are among many of the online resources you can use to get step-by-step directions and a map that you can cut and paste into the letter. Remember to include any notes on tolls or fares.

Security Procedures: If the event is at a location where there are specific procedures for security, provide specific instructions as to how guests are expected to comply.

Parking Instructions: This section is only necessary if the speaker or vendor must park in a specified area.

In case of an emergency: Provide the name and contact number (both cell and landline) of a person who can be reached the day of the event in case of delay or any other issue.

Closing paragraph: The last paragraph is used to remind the speaker or vendor to contact you if they have any questions about how to get the event.

Note: This is another document that might prove more expedient as an e-mail (delete all items above the greeting) or e-mail attachment (use as is).

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Speaker/Vendor Confirmation

Chapter Name
Address
City, State Zip

Speaker's Name
Title (optional)
Company
Address
City, State Zip

Date of Letter

Dear Name of Speaker/Vendor,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our IGNITE name event on date from time-time. This letter should provide all the information that you need to find the event.

Directions:

Security procedures:

Parking Instructions:

In case of a last minute emergency, please contact: Name of person and contact information

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at Phone Number.

Cordially,

Your name
Name of School/Organization

🔥 5.1 Presentation Flyer

This flyer is the primary means of advertising a Presentation event. Depending on your resources and creativity, it can be more or less elaborate. Illustrations, photos, or other graphics can enhance the appearance, but don't get carried away. Too much enhancement and the key information is forgotten. A good rule of thumb is to keep the visual element interesting but not distracting.

Note: Depending on the sophistication of your computer, this flyer template in the Resource section of the IGNITE website may not appear with all the proper graphics and fonts. If it's looking a little sad, refer to the version on the next page. Using this copy as your guide, you can manipulate the various elements of the flyer to suit your own needs. The following information is essential:

- Date, time, and location of event

- Details regarding sign-up location and deadline

- Event "ticket" with date/time and space for teacher signature

- Teaser comments such as . . .

  - *Find out what careers in engineering and technology are really like from women working in these fields.*

  - *Ask questions about college, career, and life.*

  - *Attend the presentation now; later you can join us on a field trip to Name of Company.*

  - *Lunch provided!*

IGNITE®
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In Technology Evolution

Presentation Flyer

WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING

A Panel of Women in Technology and Engineering Careers coming to speak about what their careers are really like. YOU will get to ask questions. Culturally diverse women from companies such as company names. Self employed and Community Organizations are represented.

Field trip forms to company will be distributed.

WHERE:
Location

WHEN:
Date - Time

Sign up in the Career Center

- ♥ EXCITING PRESENTATION BY WOMEN IN THE TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING FIELDS
- ♥ ASK QUESTIONS OF THE EXPERTS
- ♥ FIND OUT WHAT THESE CAREERS ARE LIKE FROM THE WOMEN WHO DO THEM EVERYDAY

Admit One — WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING — Location — Date - Time — Admit One

Admit One — WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING — Location — Date - Time — Admit One

Admit One — WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING — Location — Date - Time — Admit One

Admit One — WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING — Location — Date - Time — Admit One

🔥 5.2 Hosting A Presentation

5.2/facil - Facilitator Information and Reminders

This is a cheat-sheet of sorts for the Presentation facilitator. It's really important to keep this information handy so that nothing is forgotten.

5.2/1-sheet - One-Sheet Welcome

A one-sheet should:

- Explain what IGNITE is

- Describe what the girls will experience during a Presentation and briefly touch upon job shadows, field trips, and other events.

- Announce upcoming IGNITE events.

- Include IGNITE chapter web page address and other resources available through the local chapter and national organization.

Hand the one-sheet to students as they enter the event location.

Be sure to expand and update the one-sheet as your chapter grows. Always keep it to one page though (front and back, if necessary) — that's why it is called a one-sheet.

5.2/Peval - Presentation Evaluation

If Presentations are the heart of IGNITE, then student evaluations are the muscle that keeps that heart pumping. The girls' comments prove that magic has indeed taken place and offer insight into what aspects of the event were most meaningful and what aspects (usually logistical) could be improved. Information from the evaluations also provides the basis for each event report.

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Facilitator Information and Reminders

Before the Presentation Begins

Remember to tell speakers that you will politely interrupt when you feel a term or point needs clarification or emphasis.

If this is a lunchtime Presentation, remind girls that they are expected to remain for the entire program.

Preliminaries and Chapter Business

Always begin by saying *"We are all here today to participate in IGNITE – Inspiring Girls Now In Technology Evolution. In IGNITE we hope to inspire you to learn more about careers in technology and engineering. Before we begin the actual Presentation, however, let's take a quick look at the One-Sheet…"*

Then briefly point out website and contact information and review upcoming events. If there is a field trip on the horizon, this is the time to pass out the forms.

Audience Warm-Up

Begin the actual Presentation by asking the girls:

"Who can tell me why there are only women in this room?" [*response*]

"Why are we all here today to talk about careers in technology and engineering?" [*response*]

Continue this question/response dialogue using the script found in Section 5.2 (and reprinted at the end of this form). After a few Presentations, you won't need it.

This script leads very smoothly into speaker introductions.

Speaker Presentations

Before introducing the speakers, tell girls when questions will be allowed. (And remember to have small wrapped candies to get those questions started.)

Each speaker tells her story for approximately 10 minutes, explaining:

- Her background (starting with the teenage years)

- How she got where she is (education, various jobs, likes/dislikes)

- What she does now

- Her struggles, obstacles, and mistakes and how she learned from each of those

Listen very carefully – Your most important job is clarification, and that means you will have to in-terrupt at times to explain a term, emphasize a key point, or ask the girls to explain what they've just heard so you know they get it.

Observe the girls – Your other role is to help the girls connect to the speakers. Check their body language; if you sense they're losing attention, try to find the right interruptive comment or question to draw them back in.

Closing Remarks and Wrap-Up

Thank speakers.

Introduce other adults in relevant positions (tech teachers, career specialists, principal, etc.)

Announce future events, especially if a field trip is planned to the company represented by these women.

Before dismissing, be sure to collect all the evaluation forms. (Have treats ready to "trade" for the forms and passes ready for girls who linger to talk with speakers.)

Presentations: Warm-Up Script

Can you tell me why are there only women in this room?

Why are we all here today to talk about careers in technology and engineering?

What are some careers are traditional careers for women?

 (Write responses on whiteboard, chalkboard, or easel paper.)

What are some traditional careers for men? (*Record responses*.)

A nontraditional career has fewer than 25 percent of a specified gender represented, so…

- What do you think are some nontraditional careers for men?

- What do you think are some nontraditional careers for women? (*Technology-related careers are usually mentioned here*.)

- Lots of us know women who are teachers, receptionists or bookkeepers, but how many of you know women who are engineers? (*Allow for responses, acknowledging the luck of those who might know someone working in one of these nontraditional careers*.)

- Women who work in technology? (*Responses.*)

- Women who are computer programmers? (*Responses*.)

Since many of you don't know women who work in these often high-paying, interesting jobs, we have invited a few here today to meet with you.

Here on this panel are women who work in nontraditional, technology-oriented jobs.

They are here to tell their stories about how they got these jobs, what they like about their jobs, and some of the challenges they faced getting the jobs.

Introduce the first speaker and then each speaker in turn.

IGNITE
Inspiring Girls Now
In Technology Evolution

One-Sheet Welcome

What is IGNITE? (Modify any of these sections to suit the needs of your own chapter.)
IGNITE is a way for young girls to meet cool women who have fascinating jobs in nontraditional specialties like technology and engineering. Through Presentations, field trips, job shadowing, and internships, girls are mentored by women who help them challenge the myths and stereotypes about technology careers.

How does it work?
Each IGNITE chapter offers unique opportunities for female students to explore careers and meet the women working in high-tech jobs. It all starts with something that has been happening at every chapter since IGNITE's inception in 2000, a Presentation. Presentations are myth-busting events where women tell stories about their lives and the challenges they have overcome to find the high-tech jobs they love. These women are from local technology companies, use technology as a significant part of their jobs in companies, or own their own high tech business. IGNITE encourages all girls in the school, even those who do not think they want high-tech careers, to meet these women and listen to their stories. After each Presentation, we invite girls interested in the next level of information to attend field trips or other IGNITE events.

To learn more, check out the IGNITE website at ignite-us.org. We have information about scholarships, internships, summer camps, and other girls and women interested in technology careers.

IGNITE Events
Field Trips – Girls visit local companies and learn about technology from women who use it every day. They share lunch with these women and learn the art of personal and professional networking.

Job Shadow – Girls spend time following women in technology around on a normal workday. They attend meetings, meet co-workers, have lunch and ask questions about the woman's job and the company.

Conferences – Local technology companies host one- and two-day conferences featuring workshops and activities that link technology to real world situations.

Ignite Unites – This program connects high tech women with specific teachers and programs in high schools. Women sign up to meet with girls in that program a few times each semester, working in concert with the teacher to provide support and encouragement for the girls.

Website – The official IGNITE website is ignite-us.org. To find our chapter web page, simply explain steps. Also browse the national organization pages and other chapter web pages for new ideas and inspiration. Soon your own comments on today's event will appear on the Web as well.

Summer Internships – Check with your chapter coordinator or look on the IGNITE website to find internship opportunities at local high tech companies.

List chapter coordinator's name and contact information here.

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In Technology Evolution

Presentation Evaluation

Please check the statement that best answers each of the following questions.

How much did you learn about high-tech careers today?

☐ I learned a lot.
☐ I learned a few things.
☐ Didn't learn much.

Prior to this event, were you considering a technical degree or career (computer science, information systems, microbiology/aerospace, engineering)?

☐ Yes, I had been considering a technical degree or career.
☐ No, I had not been considering a technical degree.
☐ Undecided, hadn't thought about it, or I needed more information.

Following today's event are you more likely to consider a technical degree?

☐ Yes, I will be considering a technical college degree.
☐ No, I will not be considering a technical degree.
☐ Undecided or I need more information.

Please answer the following questions with 1-2 sentences each.

What did you like the best about today's event?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What was the most interesting thing that you heard today?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please tell us what we can do to make this event even better.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What other kinds of IGNITE events would you like to see?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Would you like to be a part of an IGNITE on-line community and receive information about scholarships, internships and other opportunities that might interest you? If so, please fill in the following information. Please write very neatly.

Name: _____

School: _____

Grade: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

🔥 5.3 Event Report

5.3/rpt

These are certainly the easiest and most enjoyable of all the documents—just informal write-ups (e-mails, really) with four very simple elements:

- Event data (type, date, & location)

- Brief, exuberant introduction

- Thank yous to featured participants and other volunteers

- List of the comments from the evaluation forms

It is very important that the report be written after each event as soon as possible. This will help you capture the magic that you felt at the event. It's also important that the report goes out quickly to everyone on your list-serve. We want girls and volunteers to enjoy the feedback while the experience is still fresh.

We encourage you to include photos when you post the report to your chapter's web page. Pictures help girls recall more details of the experience and create interest for IGNITE members from other chapters who are checking out your events. We want to inspire all the chapters to help each other and share ideas, so that we are creating a community network that is a resource for everyone.

As with the rest of the templates, we have supplied a structure to help you get started. If you would like more inspiration, please visit the home of our Seattle chapter at www.ignite-us.org and take a quick read of the reports posted there.

IGNITE
Inspiring Girls Now
In Technology Evolution

Event Report

Event Name
Event Date

Hi All:

We had a super fabulous presentation yesterday at event location. What an amazing turnout - the whole event venue was almost full!! The girls had a million questions - great questions! - and we could have been there several more hours, if we were able. The speakers were beyond words. The stories were so heartfelt, inspirational, and fascinating. Even with all those girls you could hear a pin drop!! Each woman simply told her own story, which is the heart of what we do in IGNITE.

To our presenters - you all open up and share your stories and your obstacles in such a real way that we all feel truly touched very deeply. You all also had fun and your enthusiasm was contagious. It is obvious how much you all love coming in to talk to the girls. We are so fortunate to have the amazing women volunteers that we have. Each time we have an event, I am awed by the magic that happens in the room.

I want to thank our very special speakers: list speakers with the companies they work for. You were all exceptional speakers and really connected with the young women. It was thrilling to hear all of you and watch the girls get inspired!

I also want to thank our wonderful teacher, teacher's name, who makes all of this happen!! She inspires me everyday, being who she is. How lucky we are to have her in the classroom. She is a master teacher and one of my role models with kids. It is an honor to get to work with her. And thank you to any of the teacher's assistants (student teachers included). You really jumped in and made this day very special. I am very excited to have you on board!!

Thank you to all the staff here - the school's principal, school counselors, and other support staff who are involved with IGNITE in any way. And thank you to the wonderful Project Lead the Way teacher teacher's name, who also is an amazing IGNITE partner. Highlight everyone's relationship to IGNITE. You may need more than one paragraph for this.

Now take a look at the comments from the girls, who always say it best!! List girls' comments quoted directly from the evaluation forms. Correcting spelling and grammar may sometimes be necessary, but try to keep it in the girls' voices.

- I'd love to work in technology., I know now that there is a great chance for me to do it. I would also make enough money to manage my life.

- I liked how they told us how they got to where they are today. Hearing the stories was great. I thought it was interesting to learn that there is no math in accounting.

- I liked learning that being denied by a company like company's name is not the end and if you keep trying you can get the job.

- I liked that the speakers were the same race as me, and that I know what they were talking about. I want to go into Computer Engineering.

- I liked hearing from women who live it and experience the challenge. I liked their advice to us. I learned that there are all types of technology jobs and not just plugging codes into a computer. I really liked the video too, and want to do more IGNITE events - a club after school sounds fun.

- I liked how all of you explained what you wanted to do and really pushed yourselves to get to the career you wanted. I learned how fun work can be. It sounds like technology careers can be fun and you can learn something new everyday.

- During today's event I liked the video because it told me a lot about the program. I loved hearing the job descriptions from the speakers. I went to name of IGNITE event and I loved it. I look forward to more IGNITE events. Thank you for coming today.

- I really liked hearing about how the women had to struggle in their lives and ended up in the right place.

- I liked how we learned about the different ways we have to make our dreams come true. It was nice to see that you don't have to be the smartest person to get things in life that you want.

- I thought it was cool.

Well, what a fabulous event. I want to thank everyone who makes this all possible and for all of you continued support of IGNITE. All of you who read this, I mean you!!

Sincerely,

Your Name
Chapter Coordinator
School/organization

🔥 6.1 Field Trips

6.1/FTchk - Industry/College Visit Field Trip Checklist

Field trips and college visits are very important IGNITE experiences because they take the students out of the classroom and show them real world situations. To create the best experience, certain key details should be in place. By going through this checklist carefully, you can optimize the limited time available during these trips.

6.1/FTprep - Student Field Trip Prep

This letter is about expectations: your expectations for students and their behavior during the field trip and their expectations of what the field trip has to offer them.

Well before the actual field trip, girls need to think about what they want out of the experience. Why are they going? What do they want to learn? What questions do they want to ask? By taking a few moments to prepare, the girls will have a much more valuable experience because they will be able to focus on what they want to learn.

Even if they use only the questions we provide, these will allow them to be an active participant. We don't want any IGNITE experience to be a passive one!

6.1/FTeval - Field Trip Evaluation

This evaluation is identical to the Presentation evaluation, but is presented as a separate document for convenience.

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Industry/College Visit
Field Trip Checklist

Planning and Logistics (1-3 months ahead of time)

☐ Confirm field trip date and schedule with industry/college contact.

☐ Inform school staff of the date(s) and estimated number of girls participating.

☐ Select and invite teachers, administrators, and parents to act as chaperones. Make sure to have at least 2 backups.

☐ Pass out field trip information, permission slips, and sign up sheets during the Presentation.

☐ Order buses.

☐ Put in substitute requests for teachers who are chaperoning.

☐ Ensure all girls who have signed up receive their field trip packet [6.1/FTprep] with expectations and preparation instructions.

Days Prior (week of _____)

☐ Confirm buses.

☐ Confirm chaperones or backups.

☐ Assign someone to take pictures.

☐ Confirm schedule with industry/college contact.

☐ Send reminder to school staff with list of girls participating.

Day Of (Date: _____)

☐ Have evaluation forms [6.1/FTeval] for students to fill out.

☐ Have enough one-sheets [5.2/1-sheet] for all attendees (including industry/college participants).

☐ Make sure your photographer has her camera.

☐ Have enough IGNITE brochures (download from website) to five to contacts.

☐ Collect names, job titles, and e-mails for all contacts.

Days Following (no later than_____)

☐ Send thank you note to all industry/college participants. Encourage girls to do the same.

☐ Compile evaluation forms and write a report [5.3/rpt] based on them.

☐ Send report to chapter list-serve.

☐ Post report and digital pictures on chapter web pages.

☐ If possible, network with industry/college volunteers to evaluate successes and challenges.

SAMPLE

IGNITE
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Student Field Trip Prep

Date

Dear Student's Name,

This is to remind you about the upcoming field trip to Name of company/organization on date. We will be meeting at time at/in/on location to describe transportation (e.g. board buses).

What is going to happen? (Modify as necessary to suit your needs)

Women who work at Name of Company will greet our form of transportation and take us on a tour that will last about an hour. After the tour, we will join 6-8 of the women for lunch and a discussion. During lunch, I will act as a facilitator so that you are comfortable. I will ask you to tell your name, grade and what you hope to get out of your visit to the company. The women will then introduce themselves and tell us a bit about what they do. After introductions, we will have a discussion based on the questions you have prepared.

How YOU can get the most out of this experience (Modify as needed.)

The women you will meet all have different kinds of jobs in the company. In order for you to learn about the things that interest you, your job is to come prepared. Please be ready with a list of three questions. What do you really want to know about careers in high technology or about women who work in them? You will be able to ask at least one of your questions, so give some thought to what you most need to know and write your questions in order of importance.

Suggested questions include: (Again, modify.)

- What kinds of skills do I need to get a job here?

- I am interested in _____; how can I best prepare for that career?

- What does it mean to be "in technology"?

- I like _____; is there a high-tech career that relates?

- What are some careers people have at your company?

- What do you actually do each day?

- Why is this a great career choice for women?

- How can I prepare to work at this company?

- How did you get here?

- I am a people person; is there a job in technology for someone like me?

Please prepare carefully. The more effort you put in this, the better the experience will be for you. The women at Company Name are so glad you are visiting. They are excited that you are interested in all these career possibilities. These women have worked hard to take down many barriers for women in technology and they want you to join them in these exciting careers.

Thanks for your effort in preparing. I'm sure we'll all have a great day.

Your Name

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In Technology Evolution

Field Trip Evaluation

Please check the statement that best answers each of the following questions.

How much did you learn about high-tech careers today?

☐ I learned a lot.

☐ I learned a few things.

☐ Didn't learn much.

Prior to this event, were you considering a technical degree or career (computer science, information systems, microbiology/aerospace, engineering)?

☐ Yes, I had been considering a technical degree or career.

☐ No, I had not been considering a technical degree.

☐ Undecided, hadn't thought about it, or I needed more information.

Following today's event are you more likely to consider a technical degree?

☐ Yes, I will be considering a technical college degree.

☐ No, I will not be considering a technical degree.

☐ Undecided or I need more information.

Please answer the following questions with 1-2 sentences each.

What did you like the best about today's event?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What was the most interesting thing that you heard today?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please tell us what we can do to make this event even better.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What other kinds of IGNITE events would you like to see?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Would you like to be a part of an IGNITE on-line community and receive information about scholarships, internships and other opportunities that might interest you? If so, please fill in the following information. Please write very neatly.

Name: _____

School: _____

Grade: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

🔥 6.1 Conferences

6.1/conf.chk - Conference Checklist

Like the Presentation and field trip checklists, this is simply a quick overview of the planning steps, with convenient check-off boxes so you can track your progress.

6.1/conf.prep - Conference Prep Packet

This packet provides students with a lot of information to prepare them for an upcoming conference. Besides detailing where they need to go and when they need to be there, the packet includes workshop topics and information on the key speakers. For the "where they need to go" part, you will need to include a map of the conference site with building designations and room numbers.

6.1/conf.eval - Conference Evaluation

As explained earlier, evaluation forms are critical. Feedback not only helps you make the next event even more successful, but also encourages corporate and college participants to stay involved.

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Conference Checklist

Planning and Logistics (begin at least 3 months in advance)

☐ Confirm conference date(s) and schedule with industry/college contact.

☐ Inform school staff of the date(s) and estimated number of girls participating.

☐ Select and invite teachers, administrators, and parents to act as chaperones. Make sure to have at least 2 backups.

☐ Distribute trip information, permission slips, and sign-up sheets.

☐ Order buses.

☐ Put in substitute requests for teachers who are chaperoning.

☐ Ensure that all girls who have signed up receive their conference packet [6.1/ conf.prep] with expectations and preparation instructions.

Days Prior (week of _____)

☐ Confirm buses.

☐ Confirm chaperones or backups.

☐ Assign someone to take pictures.

☐ Confirm schedule with industry/college contact.

☐ Send reminder to school staff with list of girls participating.

Day Of (date: _____)

☐ Have evaluation forms [6.1/conf.eval] for students to fill out.

☐ Have enough one-sheets [5.2/1-sheet] for all attendees (including industry/college participants).

☐ Make sure your photographer has her camera.

☐ Have plenty of IGNITE brochures (download from the website) to hand out

☐ Collect names, job titles, and emails for all contacts.

Days Following (no later than _____)

☐ Send thank you notes to all industry/college participants. Encourage girls to do the same.

☐ Compile evaluation forms and write a report [5.3/rpt] based on them.

☐ Send report to your chapter list-serve.

☐ Post report and digital pictures to your chapter web pages.

☐ If possible, network with industry/college volunteers to evaluate successes and challenges.

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Conference Preparation

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

School/Org Name: _____

This is to remind you about the conference at the Company/Organization Name on date. We will be meeting at time in/on/at location to describe transportation (e.g. board buses).

What is going to happen?

Please write here what the conference is going to be like and what the students should expect. Provide a general overview of the experience. A detailed schedule appears later.

How YOU can get the most out of this experience

The girls need to think about what they want out of the field trip experience beforehand. Why are they coming.? What do they want to learn? What questions do they want to ask? By taking a few moments to prepare, the girls will have a much more valuable experience because they will be able to focus on what it is they want to learn..

Even if they use the questions we provide, it will allow them to be an active participant. . . . We don't want any IGNITE experience to be a passive one!

Schedule of Events (Modify as needed to suit your circumstances.)

9:30-10:30	Arrive, Register and Welcome - Location
	Name and Title of Each Speaker
10:30-11:15	Breakout Section 1 - (List all 4 items of info for each workshop)
	Workshop title
	Workshop location
	Names and titles of workshop presenters
	Brief description of workshop
11:30-12:15	Lunch
	Description of lunch events and presentations

12:30-1:15   Breakout Section 1I - (same format as morning session)
                Workshop title
                Workshop location
                Names and titles of workshop presenters
                Description of workshop

1:30-2:30   Wrap-up and Close - Location
                Name and Title of Each Speaker

About the Presenters

Person's Name and Tile
Brief description of current position at the company

(repeat for each presenter)

Maps of Rooms and Buildings

Provide whatever maps and/or floor plans are needed

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Conference Evaluation

We hope you enjoyed the conference. Please take a few minutes to fill out this evaluation form. Your input is important and will help us improve the next conference. Thank you!

Please list the highlights of this conference.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What workshop(s) did you take? What did you like the most about them?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What were your thoughts about our keynote speakers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thoughts about other speakers and/or presenters?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What would have made this conference better? What should we have done differently?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Would you like to be a part of an IGNITE on-line community and receive information about scholarships, internships and other opportunities that might interest you? If so, please fill in the following information. Please write very neatly.

Name: _____

School: _____

Grade: _____

E-mail address: _____

Phone Number: _____

🔥 6.1 Job Shadow

6.1/jsh.stu - Student Interest

This form is for helping match students with the perfect mentor by learning each student's interests and past job experience. When giving the form to students, remind them that neatness counts.

6.1/jsh.corp - Corporate Interest

Used to recruit mentors for job shadowing, this form is probably best delivered as an e-mail attachment. The chapter coordinator sends it to the corporate liaison, who then forwards it to likely candidates, collects their responses, and passes that information back to the chapter coordinator.

6.1/jsh.pkt - Student Packet

States expectations and requirements of the job-shadow experience. Besides the date and a couple names, the only section you need to fill out is the actual job shadow information. The rest of the sections require input from the student.

6.1/jsh.steval - Student Evaluation

This evaluation is a good way to end the job shadow experience. It allows the corporate mentor to offer feedback on the day, and the information itself is valuable to both the student and the chapter. Also, reviewing the checklist portion of the form before the job shadow provides another good preparation activity for the student.

There is very little information for the chapter to fill in on this form—so little, in fact, that it's easy to forget to do it at all. You need to add your name near the beginning and—very important—the name of the corporate job shadow coordinator (and the date you need the form returned) at the very end.

At the conclusion of the job shadow, the student removes the evaluation from the Job Shadow Packet and leaves it with her mentor. The mentor completes the checklist and a few short-answer questions and gives the paper to the corporate person coordinating the job shadow (who will eventually return all the evaluations to the chapter).

6.1/jsh.tchr - Teacher Interest

This form is the teacher application for a job shadow experience. Job shadows allow teachers to learn new skills and evaluate the suitability of the job shadow environment for students.

6.1/t.accpt - Teacher Acceptance Letter

This letter informs teachers of their acceptance into a job shadow program and asks them to commit to participation. This is another one of those forms that is best delivered via e-mail. In that case, delete any text that precedes the greeting.

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Job Shadow: Student Interest

Name: _____

School: _____

Grade: _____

E-mail address: _____

Phone number: _____

Career Interest

What careers interest you most and why? (Please be as specific as possible.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Job Experience

Describe the last five job experiences you have had. Include the stuff you wouldn't normally think of as a "job" such as baby-sitting, mowing lawns, washing cars, or writing for the school newspaper. List specific dates and describe the jobs in detail:

Date	Job	Duties & responsibilities
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Special Skills

List any skills you have that will help you be successful in a work environment. These would include your abilities in computers, communication (oral and written), graphics, and problem solving.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Clubs

List any clubs, sport teams, youth groups, choirs, or bands to which you belong.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Interests and Hobbies

List any personal hobbies and interests you may have (computers, music, video games, animals, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Community Service

List volunteer work you have done to help your school or community. Examples would include raising money for the needy, working at a food bank or soup kitchen, working at an animal shelter or helping senior citizens.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Achievements and Awards

List any awards and acknowledgements that you may have received. For example, Student of the Month, team MVP, or honor roll.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Special Accommodations

List any accommodations you require (ASL interpreter, wheelchair access, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Job Shadow:
Request for Corporate Mentors

IGNITE is an organization dedicated to providing girls with experiences that introduce them to high-tech careers. IGNITE Chapter Name provides opportunities for girls from Name of School to follow women in your organization through a normal business day. Job shadowing is an invaluable opportunity for girls to learn about careers in technology through a personal, one-on-one experience.

We have approximately number girls who are interested in shadowing Company Name employees, and we would like to accommodate all of them if at all possible. The girls will be on your campus on date from time of visit. Each girl will be assigned to an employee whose job most closely matches the student's stated career interests.

The girl assigned to you will follow you throughout your day, attending meetings, observing and asking questions about your responsibilities, the path you traveled to your current position, the kinds of schooling or certification required for your position, and other details related to your job and/or her own situation. We ask that you treat your assigned student to lunch, using the time as another opportunity to get to know her and her career aspirations.

If you would like to act as a job shadow mentor, please fill in the following information. Once a student has been assigned to you, you will receive an e-mail with your shadow's name, age and interest. If you have any questions or would like more information before you volunteer, please call or e-mail IGNITE Coordinator's Name at phone number or e-mail address.

Your Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Please provide a concise description of your job

_____

_____

_____

_____

Outside of work, what clubs, sports, hobbies or other interests do you pursue?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe the type of student you think would most benefit from spending a day with you? Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your interest and willingness to participate. Please return this completed form to Name of Corporate Liaison Person, who can be reached at phone number or e-mail address.

Important: To ensure our girls are properly prepared for this experience, we need your information no later than date. Again, we greatly appreciate your help.

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Job Shadow: Student Packet

Date
Student's Name

This packet is designed to help you prepare for the day with your job shadow mentor. Please take the time to review it carefully. Good preparation will help you engage in conversation with your mentor, ask meaningful questions, and be an active participant in this experience.

At the end of your job shadow, please remember to ask your mentor for a business card and contact information, so that you can send her a thank you note.

Thank you,
Your Name

<u>Job Shadow Information</u>

Job Shadow Date: _____

Starting Time: _____

Ending Time: _____

Mentor's Name: _____

Mentor's Phone: _____

Mentor's E-mail: _____

Company Name: _____

Site Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Directions: _____

Transportation: _____

Comments: _____

_____

Before the Job Shadow (Modify as necessary)

- Call and confirm the time of the job shadow two to three days before the appointment. Ask your mentor about the appropriate dress.

- Make sure that your teachers are aware that you are going to be on the job shadow and get any assignments that you might miss during your job shadow.

During the Job Shadow

- Use the agreed-upon public or private transportation arrangements to the site.

- Do not bring a friend with you.

- Dress appropriately and wear comfortable shoes.

- You may bring your cell phone to use in case of emergency, but other electronic equipment (walkmans, cameras, etc.) are not allowed. Do not use your cell phone to take pictures.

- No smoking or chewing gum.

- Meet your mentor at the agreed upon time and location. If your mentor is not there to meet you, there will be another employee from the department to meet you. If no one is there, wait 15 minutes and then call name of appropriate person at phone number.

- Greet your mentor in a professional manner. Shake hands. Make eye contact. Smile, introduce yourself, and thank the person for his or her time.

- Your mentor will take you directly to the worksite, introduce you to co-workers and show you around. He or she should inform you of areas you are not permitted to enter. If not, ask politely.

- Your mentor will review the day's schedule with you. If you have questions about the day, this is a good time to ask. Also ask your host if he or she has any questions for you. Tell the host a little about yourself and why you are interested in this profession. Explain that you will be taking some notes while you are there.

- You may be included in meeting(s) or official proceedings. During these, just listen, observe, and only answer questions if directly spoken to.

- Communicate your ideas and questions to your mentor. Be direct and specific. You may use some of the sample questions provided in this packet; just change the language to fit your particular situation.

- Observe what your mentor does and note this in the Observation section of the packet.

- Federal Child Labor Laws regulate what you can and cannot do while on the job shadow. If you are under 18, you can not:

    ○ Operate power-driven machinery

    ○ Climb ladders or work on scaffolding or roofs, or drive a vehicle

    ○ Work before 7:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m.

- If you are under 16, you can not:

    ○ Load or unload trucks

    ○ Work in transportation, warehouse, storage, or construction jobs

- Before you leave, give your mentor the Student Evaluation form (last page of packet). Ask him or her to complete it and give it to the person named on the form.

- Ask your mentor for a business card. If he or she does not have one, ask for their name and address before leaving. Be sure to get the correct spelling.

Questions to Ask During the Job Shadow

During your job shadow, you are expected to ask questions. Speak clearly, listen carefully, and record brief notes. When asking the questions, remember that your mentor may choose not to answer some, and that's OK.

1) What is your job title?

2) What hours do you work?

3) What is the primary mission of this organization?

4) What are the responsibilities of your department?

5) What are your responsibilities?

6) How does your job relate to the overall organization?

7) Describe a typical day at work.

8) What is the most interesting part of your job?

9) What does your supervisor expect of you each day?

10) What is the hardest part of your job?

11) How did you decide to do this type of work?

12) What is the salary *range* for someone working in this field?

13) What factors determine salary increases?

14) What are the possible benefits and rewards, other than financial, of this career?

15) Do you work mostly alone or with other people?

16) What skills, education, experience, and qualifications are necessary to be successful in your position? These can include computers skills, internships, apprenticeships, and licensing.

17) How did you get training for this job?

18) Where would you suggest I get training?

19) How have technological advances affected this job?

20) How do you think this job will change in the next five years? The next ten?

21) What kind of demand for jobs like yours do you foresee in the coming years?

22) What are the advancement opportunities?

23) What kind of student were you in high school?

24) Do you have any advice for me as I consider my career options?

25) How do you balance work/career and your family?

26) Anything else that you find interesting?

Job Shadow Observations

Workers need many skills to be successful in today's workplace. Some of these are the practical ones you learn in school, like reading, writing, computers, and critical thinking. Others are more intangible, or "soft," like communications, diplomacy, and resource/time management.

To complete this section, you'll need to observe the skills your mentor uses in his or her job. Try to answer as much as possible by observation, but it's certainly OK to ask questions too.

Resources - What time, money, people, materials or space do you need?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Diplomacy - What skills do you need to get along with everyone you work with?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Information - Where can you find the information that you need?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Tools and Technology - What tools and equipment do you use in your job?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Reading & Writing - What do you read? What kinds of writing do you do?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Math - When and why do you need to use math? What kinds of math?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Communication Skills - What kind of listening and speaking skills do you need?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Problem Solving/Critical Thinking - How do you make decisions?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Creativity – Does your job require creativity? Provide outlets for creativity? How?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Personal Responsibility - In what ways do you need to be prepared and organized?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank You Letter

Within a week after you have completed your job shadow, write and mail a thank you note to your mentor. Mailing is better than e-mailing because it shows you took time and effort to send the thank you. It also makes it more personal. Be sure to include the following parts in your note:

- Refer to the job shadow.

- Thank the person for their time and the information that they gave you.

- State how you benefited from the experience.

- Mention a unique incident or particular piece of information that made an impression on you.

- Tell your mentor how you have applied (or intend to apply) what you learned during the job shadow.

- Thank the person again.

- Sign your first and last name.

A sample letter would look something like this:

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for allowing me to spend time with you last week on a job shadow. I especially enjoyed sitting in on the meeting to choose a name for the new software program. I was surprised at how creative, and funny, some of your colleagues were. As a result of what I observed and learned during the day, I think I want to improve my computer skills and also study psychology (maybe business psychology) so that someday I can be the Human Resources Manager of some interesting company.

I can see now how some of the things I'm learning in school really are important, and I guess I'd better pay more attention to math!

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Sally Smart

If you forgot to get a business card or contact information from your mentor, you can always call the company afterwards – there are no acceptable excuses for not sending a proper thank you note!

Job Shadow Report

Student: _____

Complete this section **after** your job shadow.

Mentor's Name: _____

Mentor's Title: _____

Mentor's Phone: _____

Mentor's E-mail: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Describe the type of business.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Who are your mentor's customers or clients?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe your mentor's duties.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe your mentor's qualifications and skills.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What education or training do you need to do your mentor's job?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What interested you most about the job?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What interested you least about the job?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Who/what did the mentor work with on the job? (*Check all that apply*)

___People   ___Data   ___Things   ___Ideas

What advancement possibilities are available for someone in this job?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is the salary range?

_____

Will there be a demand for this job in the future? Will the demand increase or decrease?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What practical and "soft" skills did you observe?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Would you be interested in a short-term internship at the organization? Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Job Shadow Evaluation and Action Plan

After completing your job shadow, take a moment to reflect on what you learned about yourself during the experience and complete this section.

My mentor gave me an idea of the general expectations for a good employee.

___Strongly Agree   ___Agree   ___Disagree   ___Strongly Disagree

I learned about the skills and qualities needed for my mentor's job.

___Strongly Agree   ___Agree   ___Disagree   ___Strongly Disagree

I learned about the necessary training and education for my mentor's job.

___Strongly Agree   ___Agree   ___Disagree   ___Strongly Disagree

I enjoyed my job shadow.

___Strongly Agree   ___Agree   ___Disagree   ___Strongly Disagree

I would like to work for this company.

___Strongly Agree   ___Agree   ___Disagree   ___Strongly Disagree

Describe your career goals and expectations.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What skills do you need to improve?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What steps will you take to improve your skills and reach your career goals?

_____

_____

_____

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Job Shadow:
Student Evaluation

Dear Mentor:

We know you've had a very busy day, and we truly appreciate the time you've spent with one of our IGNITE girls. If you could take just a few more minutes to complete this checklist, the information will help to us assess and improve our job-shadow program.

Thank you again for your support of IGNITE.

Your Name

Name of your student "shadow": _____

Please place a check beside all statements that apply to this student.

☐ She arrived on time.
☐ She wore appropriate clothing.
☐ Her cell phone did not interrupt our day.
☐ She did not chew gum.
☐ She made good eye contact during conversation.
☐ She spoke clearly; I didn't have to ask her to speak "up" or repeat things.
☐ She displayed professional behavior throughout the day.
☐ Allowing for initial shyness, she seemed comfortable in conversation and volunteered information and/or ideas of her own.
☐ She seemed comfortable when interacting with my colleagues.
☐ She asked appropriate questions.
☐ She asked insightful questions.
☐ She seemed genuinely engaged in the day's activities.
☐ She asked for my business card (or contact information).

If there is anything that particularly impressed you about this student, please note it here.

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you have any concerns about this student, please note them as well.

_____

_____

_____

_____

How would you rate your experience today?

___ excellent   ___ good   ___ OK   ___disappointing

Please briefly explain your rating:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Would you volunteer to be a job shadow mentor again? Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Any other comments you would like to share with us?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you very much for taking the extra time to complete this evaluation. Please give this paper to Name of corporate liaison before date.

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Job Shadow: Teacher Interest

Participants receive …

Use the bullets below to list any compensation, including clock hours, that teachers will receive for participating.

-

-

-

Participants will…

List expectations. These include, but are not limited to, what you expect the teacher to do during and after the job shadow, what teachers should expect during the experience, and the skills they should gain. Modify the list below to suit the particular situation.

- Be on time and attend everything including preliminary training, job shadow, and de-briefing sessions (12 hours total).

- Be able to create/mentor a job shadow experience with one or more students and de-brief students.

- Complete simple job shadow activities designed for instructors/students.

How to Apply (State when and how you would like to receive the application.)

Please fill out the following information and send this application by specific means to chapter contact's Name at address or number by deadline date.

Name: _____

Job Title: _____

School: _____

School Address: _____

_____

Phone number: _____

Fax number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Reasons you want to do the job shadow

_____

_____

_____

_____

Local companies/organizations where you would like to job shadow

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Job Shadow: Teacher Acceptance

Chapter Name
Address
City, State Zip

Teacher's Name
School Name
School Address
City, State, Zip

Date of Letter

Dear Name of Teacher,

Congratulations! You have been chosen to participate in an IGNITE nontraditional job shadow experience this/during time period (i.e. during spring break or this summer). Please understand that there are required orientation and debriefing sessions for participants in this program.

The date(s)* for your orientation are list date or dates from time-time. The date of the debriefing session will decided at the orientation meeting.

All meetings will be held at location (and address if needed).

Your response to this letter constitutes confirmation of your participation and acceptance of the required responsibilities. I look forward to seeing you at orientation.

Sincerely,

Your name
Chapter Coordinator
School/Chapter Name

*For summer programs, a choice of 2 orientation dates (one in June, the other in July) is usually offered. You will need to adapt the wording to allow teachers to indicate their preference.

🔥 6.1 IGNITE Unites

6.1/unite - IGNITE Unites Goals & Mentor Responsibilities

IGNITE offers the "IGNITE Unites" program for mentors who prefer to "adopt" a class, a group of classes (e.g. Ms. Brown's three computer classes), or a department with the goal of providing up-dated tech information, student support, hands-on project ideas, or some other relevant and specific contribution. The nature of the contribution is determined by the mentor and teacher(s) together.

This handout is for mentors who want to work with specific classes in local schools. It has four basic sections:

- Intro/purpose

- Guidelines

- Goals and responsibilities

- Relevant contact information

As in other documents, you will see very little blue text here, but you can modify any of the existing text to best suit your circumstances.

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IGNITE Unites

Welcome!

Thank you for participating in the IGNITE Unites program. Below you will find general information and contact numbers for your school and teacher. Please schedule an appointment with the teacher or department with whom you will be working at your earliest convenience. If you would like me to attend that meeting, please let me know the date and time.

Thank you,

Your name

Mentor Guidelines

Meet with the teacher or department representative to discuss the current program and create a plan for your participation. Determine how your contribution will fill the teacher, student, or department needs. For example, if students are required to complete five extra credit assignments to get an "A," decide how you, through IGNITE, can help the students achieve that goal.

Please be sure that you visit your adopted class (or department) at least two times during each semester and four times over the course of the school year. You may certainly visit more often, but this minimum commitment is vital to the success of IGNITE Unites.

Goals and Responsibilities

- Share your experiences and expertise with your class(es). If you are a Network Engineer, for example, explain what that title really means, what activities you do each day, and how what you do affects the girls' lives. Understanding relevance will encourage girls to be successful in classes that otherwise might be scary for them.

- Ensure all the girls in your program know about IGNITE. Tell the girls why we have IGNITE and talk about the underrepresentation of women in technology

- Talk about the importance of exploring technology careers.

- Spend time with each girl and learn about her interest in pursuing technology.

- Visit the IGNITE site with the girls so they know there are resources.

- Work with the teacher to create extra credit assignments that will help girls learn about IGNITE while giving us material to add to the IGNITE website. For example, have them review an IGNITE event or write about taking a technology class from a female point of view.

- Write a report on your progress to share with other participants (mentors, teachers, and/or department personnel). Reports are expected after each visit.

Provide school, department, and teacher contact information.

SAMPLE

🔥 Toolkit Evaluation

app/TKeval

This form may not be as much help to *you* as all the previous ones, but it is very important to us and to the future of this Toolkit. Your feedback regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and errors (typos happen) in these materials will ensure that future editions are even more helpful and user-friendly.

For your convenience, this form is available on the website, ignite-us.org.

Thank you for taking the time to help *us* help *you*.

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Toolkit Evaluation/Feedback

Use the scale below to rate each of the Toolkit aspects listed.

4	3	2	1
excellent	good	OK	weak

_____ General Appearance (size, cover design, layout, use of color, graphics, photos, etc.)

_____ Overall Organization (order of information, divisions and subdivisions, ease of access)

_____ Overall Readability: content (vocabulary, style, clarity)

_____ Overall Readability: format (font type/size, subheads, page headers, etc.)

_____ Interest/Enjoyment (beyond the information, we hope you will enjoy the reading)

_____ Depth of Coverage (too little, too much, inconsistent, repetitious, obvious gaps)

_____ Appendix (organization, usefulness of explanatory intros)

_____ Forms (layout, ease of understanding, ability to modify)

Please take a few more minutes to offer comments and/or suggestions as directed below.

What three things do you most like about the Toolkit? Briefly explain why.

1) _____

_____

_____

2) _____

_____

_____

3) _____

_____

_____

Excluding specific forms (more on those later), what things would you like to see changed? Why?
How would you change them?

1) _____

_____

_____

2) _____

_____

_____

3) _____

_____

_____

Please list any obvious gaps or glaring omissions you noticed.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Also let us know of other information that you would like to have had, even if it doesn't qualify as a
glaring omission.

_____

_____

_____

Are there forms that seem unnecessary, or that need revision? Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are there other forms you'd like us to include? Briefly explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Finally, we know there's a lot of repetition in the Toolkit. Some is intentional. While we hope folks will read the entire book, we recognize that any toolkit is a resource and that people often use resources on an as-needed basis—turning to the section they need, locating the proper information, and moving on to the immediate task at hand. Given that scenario, many ideas do warrant repetition. Repetition also helps the reader internalize concepts. Repetition can also be downright annoying. **So…**

_____ On a scale of **1** (hardly noticed and/or felt it served a purpose) **to 10** (enough already – I got it the first five times!), just how annoying did you find the repetition?

Any comments or suggestions regarding this issue?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you so much for your time and thoughts. We value your input and will review everyone's comments as we begin preparation for the new and improved IGNITE Toolkit.