



Since 1999, the Women Foundation of Arkansas's Girls of Promise® program has introduced thousands of eighth-grade girls across the state to information about careers in areas related to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) while giving them the opportunity to participate in hands-on activities and meet with women professionals. These events encourage girls to pursue academic excellence in their high school and college years. Educators and counselors recommend high-achieving girls to attend the two-day conference.



Attendees get to meet other girls with similar interests in STEM and realize that it's okay to be a bright, motivated girl with big dreams. Every year at Girls of Promise®

conferences, Arkansas girls meet and learn from women with amazing jobs, such as scientists, astronauts, physicians, computer systems engineers, and others. The first Girls of Promise® conference was held at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock and expanded to include Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, Harding University in Searcy, Henderson State University and Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, NorthWest Arkansas Community College in Bentonville, Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia, University of Central Arkansas in Conway, and University of Arkansas at Monticello.



The Girls of Promise® program aims to encourage girls at a time in their life when they tend to lose interest in science. Eighth grade is a pivotal age when girls begin to internalize negative stereotypes that discourage academic achievement and denigrate those who do not conform to peer expectations and social pressures. During high school, fewer girls than boys enroll in advanced science and math courses. Frequently, those who do express interest in these disciplines are discouraged by teachers, counselors, family or friends who may not view these areas as viable fields of study for girls.

The Girls of Promise® program congratulates girls for their current success and future potential and gives girls the chance to learn about what they can pursue if they aim high and continue to achieve. What's more, when girls meet women in successful roles they see that with hard work and support careers in these fields are attainable and rewarding.

In 2010, an impact assessment of Girls of Promise® was conducted by staff and volunteers of WFA. This assessment illustrates the success of this now 15 year program. Since that time, volunteers have continued to contact Girls of Promise® alumnae each summer to see if they are continuing their studies, in what fields, and if they are still keeping their "promise" made at their conference. This report can be found on the WFA website: [www.womensfoundationarkansas.org](http://www.womensfoundationarkansas.org).

An endowment, the Joan Rule Campbell Girls of Promise® Fund, has been established to ensure this important program is sustained in perpetuity. Donations into this endowment may be made online at the WFA website.