



709 North Aiken Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15206 | 412-362-2001 (tel) | 412-362-2004 (fax)

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACTS:** Sheila Rawlings  
Director of Development and Career Exposure & Workforce Development  
(412) 626-6851

### **THE NEIGHBORHOOD ACADEMY LAUNCHES FEMALE FOCUSED STEM PROGRAM SPONSORED BY PPG**

#### **Pittsburgh, PA – May 17, 2021**

On Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, The Neighborhood Academy began a STEM Program intentionally designed for rising 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade girls. Female Focus is a 14-week STEM curriculum that will include hands-on activities, as well as career exploration, and will take place both online and in-person on Saturdays through June.

Building on the success of the all-boys STEM-focused middle school, Assistant Head of School for Academics, Mr. Brent Jernigan stated, “we are now intentionally encouraging participation from girls in underrepresented communities to further build a pipeline of scientists. Fortunately, we had the opportunity, through the generosity of the PPG Foundation and Malesia Dunn, Executive Director, PPG Foundation, to partner in this effort. Ms. Dunn demonstrated immediate enthusiasm about this project and has been instrumental in shaping key elements of the program.”

“At PPG and the PPG Foundation, we are focused on creating environments that allow students, and especially underrepresented students of color and girls, to experience STEM in new and engaging ways,” noted Dunn. “There is a gender gap in STEM and programs such as TNA’s Female Focus will help engage and inspire these girls as they consider their career choices.”

Female Focus will incorporate the following learning objectives and activities into its program design: 1) Math intensive, blended learning curriculum, 2) Collaborative learning, social etiquette and skills building in the sciences, 3) High-interest STEM activities such as, science and home economics projects, 4) Awareness and exposure to STEM-related fields through guest speakers, and 5) Confidence building, validation and affirmation in STEM-related fields.

The need for this program is clear in that Black women are nearly invisible in STEM fields. Multiple factors have led to a dearth of these populations. From mindsets rooted in stereotypes; that girls should be ladies and not pursue careers dominated by men, to isolation and lack of camaraderie and inclusivity of women in STEM fields, to a lack of academic advising. Sadly, girls often do not to pursue math and science classes, let alone careers, despite their aptitude for their subjects.

### **About The Neighborhood Academy:**

Founded in 2001, The Neighborhood Academy is private, independent college-preparatory school for grades 6-12 that serves inner-city youth. Beginning in 1993 as an innovative summer school program for at-risk youth in Larimer, it is now in its 20th year of operation.

Designed to meet the needs of families who demonstrate financial need, its mission is to break the cycle of generational poverty by empowering youth and preparing them for college and citizenship. The school is dedicated to developing the minds, bodies, and spirits of students so that they become fully productive members of society. To date 100% of graduates have been accepted to four-year colleges/universities, and alumni boast a 77% five-year college graduation rate, with more than 90% returning to the Pittsburgh workforce.

For more information about **The Neighborhood Academy**, please call (412) 362-2001 or visit [www.theneighborhoodacademy.org](http://www.theneighborhoodacademy.org).

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