



MEDIA RELEASE

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Federal grant will link arts centers and science communication to get Maine's girls excited about STEM careers through Augmented Reality.

The National Science Foundation has awarded the Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance (MMSA) and their partners at the University of Maryland's Center for Environmental Sciences, Harvard University, Oregon State University, and University of Wisconsin Madison \$1 million. All sites chosen for this project will be right here in Maine. In the coming months, arts organizations across the state will be able to apply to join the project, access funds to implement the project, and participate in professional development to host summer institutes for girls starting in 2018.

Girl ARTs (Augmented Reality Toward Science): will target 112 rural art-oriented young Maine women (15-18 years old) with no prior interest in science. It partners them with scientists and media designers to create Augmented Reality (AR) experiences focused on science questions and issues relevant to their local community and environment.

AR technology superimposes a computer-generated image on a user's view of the real world, thus providing a composite view. This project takes AR, which is an emerging learning platform that takes the mobility and fun of a game like Pokemon Go, and leverages that power for science learning. It is an excellent tool that allows the cross-over between art, science and technology.

"This is a fabulous opportunity to boost the confidence of young women who do not see themselves as 'science-types', opening the door for them to consider a science or technology related career pathway. We will also be researching the strategies that scientists can use to better communicate their science to the communities that can use it the most to inform their decision making" says Principal Investigator and MMSA Executive Director, Dr. Ruth Kermish-Allen.

MMSA is a non-profit education organization that is based in Augusta but serves the education community through the whole state and beyond.

You can read more about the project here: <https://mmsa.org/girl-arts-project/>

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