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Teach a Girl to Lead™ Launched; New Site Highlights Ways to Change the Face of Leadership

The Center for American Women and Politics has unveiled its newest initiative, Teach a Girl to Lead™. TAG aims to make women's political leadership visible to the next generation and to inspire girls and young women to see themselves as future public leaders.

“Knowing that ‘you can’t be what you can’t see,’ we’re putting images and stories of women’s leadership front and center,” says CAWP director Debbie Walsh. “We want to give people working with America’s youth the tools to help them showcase the contributions of women leaders and the routes to leadership that are open to girls as well as boys.”

Former Congresswoman and Ambassador Connie Morella (R-MD) notes, “Women have been leading for a long time, but the go-to image of a political leader is still most often male. We need to change that through education about the past, present and future of women’s leadership, and that’s what Teach a Girl to Lead™ does.”

Former Congresswoman and Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke (D-CA) adds, “If young people don’t know about the path-breakers of the past, it’s hard for them to picture themselves as political leaders. Teach a Girl to Lead™ will provide ways to open the eyes of both girls and boys to new possibilities.”

The TAG site, teachgirltolead.org, offers resources for teachers, youth group leaders and parents to help them teach the young people in their lives and communities about women's leadership and civic engagement. The site includes:

- lesson plans on women in politics;
- games and activities to help young people better understand the workings of their government and the roles that women play in the process;
- exercises to enhance the capacity of girls and young women for public leadership;
- a Programs & Places map featuring girls' leadership programs, including those with a focus on public leadership, as well as coed civic leadership programs;
- historic sites where women leaders made history;
- field trip ideas to show girls and boys about women's political history;
- books and films highlighting women in public leadership;
- the Leaders Lineup to locate women leaders ready to speak to classes or groups.

Rique Ochoa, a social studies teacher in Sandy, Utah and 2012 winner of the American Civic Education Teacher Award, commented, “I’ve long wanted to teach about women leaders, but locating interesting and well-designed resources to tell their stories was tough -- I felt that I was working in isolation without any support. Now I can go to the Teach a Girl to Lead™ website to find what I need and to share my own teaching tools with others around the country.”

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According to Madeline DiNonno, CEO of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, “Our research shows that 95.5% of the high-level politicians in family films are men. Girls -- and boys! -- need to see women playing key roles, both in the movies and in real life. Teach a Girl to Lead™ is helping people who work with kids to discover fresh perspectives and a vision of diversity.”

CAWP invites input into the new site, including programs, books, or other content that should be featured, as well as general feedback. Visitors to the site can also sign up for email updates from the program.

About CAWP

The Center for American Women and Politics, a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey is a university-based research, education and public service center. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women’s changing relationship to politics and government and to enhance women’s influence and leadership in public life. CAWP is a leading authority in its field and a respected bridge between the academic and political worlds.

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