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CREEED LAUNCHES FIRST "GIRLS WHO CODE" CHAPTER IN EL PASO COUNTY

New club will inspire, educate, and equip El Paso-area girls with the computing skills to pursue 21st-century opportunities and help close gender gap in STEM

EL PASO, Texas - Today, the Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development (CREEED) announced the launch of the first El Paso-area Girls Who Code Club, a community-based affiliate of the national nonprofit organization Girls Who Code. Together, CREEED and Girls Who Code aim to inspire, educate, and equip El Paso-area girls with the computing skills to pursue 21st-century opportunities. The chapter, based at Parkland High School in the Ysleta Independent School District, is the first in a series of clubs to be announced.

"If we want an educated and highly-skilled workforce that can spur innovation and compete in the global economy of tomorrow, we need to make smart investments in education, today," said **Richard A. Castro, CREEED Board Chairman**. "We want to make sure we are fostering our local talent, and we want to provide support for our girls so that they can pursue their interests with confidence. We are proud to partner with Girls Who Code to help empower local girls to pursue their passion for technology and look forward to bringing this opportunity to more of our community."

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that by 2020 there will be 1.4 million jobs open in the computing-related fields, but the U.S. is only on pace to filling 29 percent of them with computer science graduates. At current rates only 3 percent will be filled by women.

"The Ysleta Independent School District is extremely honored to have been chosen to participate in the Girls Who Code program, and we thank CREEED for launching our community's first ever Girls Who Code club at Parkland High School," said **Dr. Xavier De La Torre, Superintendent, Ysleta Independent School District**. "We constantly strive to provide an environment that fosters the diverse interests of all our students, and our new Girls Who Code Club will add a new innovative layer of support for our young ladies."

The Parkland High School Girls Who Code Club meets after school every Monday and Wednesday in one of Parkland High School's newly renovated STEM classrooms. In order to introduce computer

science skills to girls at earlier ages, the club also has several participants from the adjacent middle school.

Girls Who Code chapters help fill a vital void, especially in communities of color. Fewer than five percent of computer science graduates are Hispanic or African-American women. Even though 74 percent of middle school girls express an interest in STEM subjects, by the time they are in high school selecting a college major, fewer than one-half of one percent of them will choose to pursue a computer science degree.

"Since founding Girls Who Code in 2012, it's been my dream to democratize access to computer science education for girls across the country," said **Reshma Saujani, founder and CEO of Girls Who Code**. "Thanks to the dedicated community partners, volunteer instructors, school leaders, librarians, parents, and girls who have stepped up to launch Girls Who Code Clubs, that's exactly what we've done today."

The Girls Who Code Clubs program offers a fun, project based curriculum covering topics like artificial intelligence, graphics, game design, cryptography, and mobile development. Clubs are led by a mix of tech industry professionals, computer science teachers, and college students, all trained in Girls Who Code's innovative curriculum and philosophy.

Organizations or schools interested in partnering with CREEED should visit www.creeed.org, and to learn more about launching a Girls Who Code Club, visit www.girlswhocode.com/Clubs.

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Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development (CREEED)
CREEED is a not-for-profit education policy and advocacy group focused on creating measurable outcomes and dedicated to closing the achievement gap for El Paso County students. We accomplish this goal by investing in policies, programs and metrics that prepare students to succeed in college and our future workforce.
Additional information is available at www.creeed.org

Girls Who Code
Girls Who Code is a national nonprofit organization working to close the gender gap in technology. Through its Summer Immersion Program and Girls Who Code Clubs, the organization is leading the movement to inspire, educate, and equip young women with the computing skills to pursue 21st century opportunities.

Additional information is available at www.girlswhocode.com.