

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Moms: Female Scientists Need Your Help

(NAPSA)—Despite a stalling economy, careers abound in science, and it's up to mothers to make sure their daughters are ready to take advantage of it.

That's the message being sent by a group of standout female scientists who say moms, in particular—but also aunts, sisters, grandmothers and even dads—need to encourage young females to pursue careers that could one day help solve everything from Alzheimer's to our overuse of the Earth's natural resources. And it comes at a time when—almost 30 years after physicist Sally Ride became the first American female in space—women remain significantly underrepresented in what's known as the “STEM fields”: science, technology, engineering and math.

Perhaps even more alarming, 32 percent of all teenage girls say they've never been encouraged to pursue such careers, according to a national Opinion Research survey.

Among those now working to make a difference: Dr. Aster Kamrath, one of five winners of this year's L'Oréal USA Fellowships for Women in Science.

Currently doing her postdoctorate work in atmospheric and environmental chemistry at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, Dr. Kamrath credits her own mother with helping her “discover the beauty of science” while home-schooling her at a crucial age.

“She instilled in me a passion for solving problems and understanding the real-world application of the scientific method,” she says.

Mothers looking to ingrain that same passion for science in their own children should heed these suggestions from all five of this year's L'Oréal USA Fellows:



Women can do a lot to encourage girls to take an interest in science.

- Encourage exploration and curiosity during everyday activities so children understand that science is everywhere.

- Meet with their science and math teachers to understand what's being taught and how you can extend those lessons outside the classroom.

- Demonstrate that STEM careers can solve real-world problems.

- Enroll in STEM-related after-school programs such as Invent Now Kids Camp Invention, or clubs like the Girl Scouts, to help spark their imagination.

- Role models are important, so introduce them to a female science professor at a local university to prove that scientists do look like them.

Each year, the L'Oréal USA Fellowships for Women in Science recognizes five top female researchers in the life and physical/materials sciences. In addition to Dr. Kamrath, the four other 2009 Fellows are: Dr. Beena Kalisky; Dr. Nozomi Nishimura; Dr. Erika Sudderth; and Dr. Tiffany Santos.

For more information about L'Oréal USA's For Women in Science program, visit its Web site at www.lorealusa.com.