Empower Her Forum
Let's make sure that everything is possible in her world

Junior Achievement partnered with the Utah Royals to hold a special forum at Rio Tinto Stadium to discuss the importance of exposing more young women to STEM education and careers. Our expert panel included Lt. Governor Spencer J. Cox, Senator Patricia M. Jones, Dr. Tamara L. Goetz, Executive Director of the STEM Action Center and Cydni Tetro, Founder and President of the Women Tech Council. The panel spoke about the need for more woman in the tech industry and how we could help encourage girls at young age to pursue classes in the STEM field. The panel also discussed ways and opportunities to inspire and encourage girls to explore their potential within the world of STEM.

As JA of Utah moves forward with the creation of a second JA City in Orem, we hope to infuse this City with more STEM focus and education. JA is looking to its sponsors and supporters to help us not only steer our direction toward STEM, but help support our efforts in bringing more awareness on the need for our girls to be inspired by the possibilities available to them if they pursue an education in STEM and STEM related careers. To that end, we look forward to holding more women’s forums in the future to help us in this endeavor.

At the conclusion of the forum, the panel and guests attended the inaugural game of the Utah Royals, Utah’s new professional soccer club that plays in the National Women’s Soccer League. During halftime, Discover Financial Services was honored on the field for their amazing volunteer support providing mentors in classrooms throughout Utah. It was a great night celebrating the success of women in our community and our gratitude goes out to the amazing panel for taking the time to share their insights with all the guests who came out to participate in this enlightening and important event.

Spencer Cox – “The state of Utah is struggling to fill its needed workforce with trained individuals. The biggest gap in our workforce is woman, especially in tech. I tell my daughter, ‘You can do anything you want and you can be anything you want, but the problem is, too often what we want and dream is limited by what we know.’ If there is no exposure to girls of STEM opportunities and jobs they will have no idea that STEM may be what they want to do. It’s why our focus is on young women and tech education. Woman are attending college and getting their degrees at a higher rate than men, except in tech. We need to expose women so they know they can do it.”

Cydni Tetro – “The charter of the Women’s Tech Council is to focus on the economic impact woman have in the technology industry. We wanted to create a community focused on how to invest in women in technology. Woman need great mentors doing great things. The tech industry in Utah is the fastest growing industry, we have to do things to inspire women to know they can fill these jobs with their talents and passions.”

Tami Geotz – “The challenges women face are different. Math is a very important part of STEM. Math is the foundation for a lot of decisions but I see that women choose to not go the STEM route because of the math component, so we need to encourage girls to see that STEM is the tool box that helps us solve big problems.”

Patricia Jones – “Everyone in this room needs to run for office. We have so few women in politics. Women are a critical part of the solutions, not just the day to day. We need to do a better job building a pipeline for woman. Running for office was an amazing prep for the rest of my career. Through politics I learned the four skills that companies are looking for when hiring: oral communication, written communication, critical thinking and problem solving. They are transferable skills that can be used as we change positions and careers.”