Twenty women students in Michigan will be awarded with an Aspirations in Computing Award during ceremonies Saturday, March 1, at 9:30 a.m. at Michigan State University's Kellogg Center in East Lansing.

The statewide honor is presented by The National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) and is designed to honor the student's computing and IT aptitude, leadership ability, academic history, and her plans for post-secondary education in the field.

Laura Dillon, professor of computer science and engineering at Michigan State University, said the award goes to students who are the state's next wave of innovators. "These young ladies represent the future of technical talent in computer science and engineering in Michigan. It is thrilling to meet them and become part of their academic and professional development."

Linda Ott, professor of computer science at Michigan Technological University, said she is excited to help foster an interest in computing technologies. "With our state and our country facing an extreme shortage of computing talent, it's vital that we encourage these women to pursue their interests and consider computing careers," Ott added.

Students receive two engraved awards: one for her, and one for her school's trophy case. They also receive opportunities for scholarships, internships, research experiences, and other educational and employment opportunities provided by NCWIT member organizations.

Saturday's keynote address will be presented by Krischa Winright, the chief information officer and vice president of information technology at Spectrum Health.

A NCWIT Educator Award will be presented to Robert Fox, computer science teacher at Midland High School, for his efforts to promote gender equity in computing. He has been teaching computer science at Midland High School since 2004. Since then, the program has grown from 36 students to more than 100 enrolled each year. Female enrollment in the introductory course has increased to more than 40 percent. Since 2006, Midland High teams have won nearly two dozen awards at collegiate-sponsored computer programming contests in Michigan and Ohio. The club also participates in and has won several awards from the American Computer Science League, a national competition.
The Michigan Aspirations in Computing Award winners are:

Ann Arbor:
Emily Newman, a senior at Pioneer High School, Ann Arbor

Battle Creek:
Rachel Chang, a senior at Kalamazoo Math and Science Center and Gull Lake High School

Farmington Hills:
Elizabeth Ho, a sophomore at Harrison High School, Farmington Hills

Galesburg:
Emily Fletcher, a senior at Kalamazoo Area Mathematics and Science Center and Galesburg High School

Grand Blanc:
Sarah Fillwock, a senior at Grand Blanc High School

Kalamazoo:
Carolyn Hamman, a junior at Kalamazoo Area Mathematics and Science Center and Gull Lake High School
Dhara Patel, a senior at Kalamazoo Area Math & Science Center and Portage Northern High School
Katherine Rothe, a senior at Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center and Portage Northern High School
Amber Salome, a senior at Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center and Comstock Public High School
Katherine Wu of Kalamazoo, a senior at Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center and Portage Central High School

Midland:
Emily Kessler, a senior at Midland High School
Melinda Kothbauer, a senior at Midland High School

Muskegon:
Danielle Schugars, a senior at Reeths-Puffer High School, Muskegon

Portage:
Kaylie Butt, a junior at Kalamazoo Area Mathematics and Science Center and Portage Northern High School
Kathleen D'Souza, a junior at Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center and Portage Northern High School
Colby Hanley, a junior at Kalamazoo Area Mathematics and Science Center and Portage Northern High School
Hanna Rumora, a senior at Kalamazoo Area Mathematics and Science Center and Portage Central High School
Maria Stull, a senior at Kalamazoo Area Mathematics and Science Center and Portage Northern High School

Plymouth:
Anna Mitchell, a junior who is homeschooled in Plymouth

Waterford:
Rebecca Wolanin, a senior at Our Lady of the Lakes High School, Waterford

Coordinators for the ceremony were Dillon, Ott, Teresa Isela VanderSloot, Director of Women in Engineering, Recruitment and K-12 Outreach in the MSU College of Engineering, and Laura Dinsmoor, a faculty member at Oakland University.
The NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing offers both a national and local award competition to generate support and visibility for young women's participation in computing around the country. The award helps students tap into the network of NCWIT Alliance members from academia, non-profit organizations, startups, and corporations, who come together in support for young women interested in computing.

The Michigan Affiliate Award is sponsored by Michigan State University, Michigan Technological University, Oakland University, Atomic Object, Pearson, TechSmith and Vertafore. The NCWIT National Award is sponsored by Bank of America, Bloomberg, and Microsoft, with additional support from Google, Intel, Motorola, and Northrop Grumman.

Related Website: Photos from the ceremony

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