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Aspirations in Computing Awards to honor young women on March 5 at MSU

Thirty-two young women from Michigan – who represent the state’s upcoming technical talent among female computer science students -- will be honored with an Aspirations in Computing Award at ceremonies Saturday, March 5, at Michigan State University.

MSU, Michigan Technological University, and Oakland University will host this year’s event, which begins at 9 a.m. in MSU’s Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center in East Lansing. The keynote speaker will be Sue Buck, vice president of product development at Vertafore.

The awards are presented by the National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT). Winners 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.

Laura Dillon, MSU professor of computer science and engineering, said this special award recognizes and encourages female students in Michigan who have the aptitude and ambition to become future leaders in computing technology at a formative stage in their development – when they are envisioning what they might like to be when they grow up.

“The award showcases the future technical talent in computer science and engineering in Michigan,” Dillon said. “It is thrilling to meet these talented young ladies at this age and to become part of their academic and professional development.”

Linda Ott, associate dean for special initiatives and a professor of computer science at Michigan Tech, said she is excited to see the enthusiasm the students have for computing.

“For many years now, we’ve been working to bring more women into computing careers since a larger and more diverse IT workforce is needed to strengthen our economy,” Ott explained. “These young women are excellent role models for younger students. Their enthusiasm and accomplishments are certain to inspire the younger generation.”

This year’s NCWIT Aspirations in Computing Educator Award will be presented to Tasha Candela, a computer science teacher at Lake Shore High School in St. Clair Shores.

Two National Aspirations Award recipients from Michigan, as well as 10 national and 20 Michigan runners-up, will also be recognized.

Coordinators for the ceremony are Dillon, Ott, Teresa Isela VanderSloot, director of Women in Engineering, Recruitment and K-12 Outreach in the MSU College of Engineering, and Laura Dinsmoor, special instructor from Oakland University's School of Engineering and Computer Science.

Dinsmoor noted that 2013 winner Christina Li, one of the first Aspirations winners in Michigan, recently achieved national recognition when she was featured by the White House in its Champions of Change website: https://www.whitehouse.gov/champions

“This statewide effort both supports young talent and is an early indicator of what our universities can look forward to,” VanderSloot added.

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.

Questions about the Michigan Award for Aspirations in Computing can be sent to MIAspirationsAwards@cse.msu.edu.

2016 Award Ceremony Winners (.pdf)

Related Website: Michigan Aspirations in Computing Awards
NCWIT Aspirations in Computing
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