

Expanding Your Horizons – Hawaii: Inspiring Young Hawaiian and Pacific Island Women to Pursue S.T.E.M. Careers

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Expanding Your Horizons in Science and Mathematics (EYH) are conferences created to promote and foster interest for girls in the areas of science and math. The conferences are held with hopes that girls who attend will be encouraged to consider careers in these disciplines. The University of Hawaii at Manoa (UH Manoa) held its first EYH-Hawaii conference in April 2014 for 5th-9th grade girls. The attendance goal of 100 girls was surpassed 118 young women registering. EYH – Hawaii ran 11 different workshops, primarily with atmospheric sciences, oceanography, marine biology, earth science and physics related topics.

The education outreach activities outlined in this work have far reaching societal implications. The lack of women in the sciences has been a problem for over 50 years. It has been shown that mentoring programs, especially those focused on STEM fields, help young women and girls to envision themselves as engineers, mathematicians and other types of scientists such as atmospheric science and related fields that are not commonly discussed or highlighted in K-12 curriculum. EYH and related conferences for young women increase the likelihood that they will pursue science and math in secondary educational settings. This is essential in a world in which few girls are choosing science and math as potential careers.

We present results from the first EYH – Hawaii event and provide an analysis on how to broaden the impact and reach more students, especially those of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island descent for future conferences. Conference attendees were surveyed regarding their experience at the conference, at individual workshops and regarding personal demographic information. Survey results are discussed and include: grade, ethnicity/race, hometown, favorite and least favorite aspect of the conference, motivation for registering, likelihood of student to suggest the event to a friend, and desire to return next year. Additionally, survey results are presented for individual workshops and for students' likelihood to consider a career in STEM after attending EYH – Hawaii.

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