

Showing Girls the Way to Tech Careers

It's more than just coding, women leaders tell students.

By Jeff Lyons, CSC senior copywriter and PR manager

Closing the gender gap in the technology sector requires women in the field to show girls the way. Several of CSC's tech leaders are doing just that.

Maureen Padgett, Marsha Auld-Saunders, and Chrissy Begatto are among the leaders who have visited schools to talk to girls about careers in technology. "We tell them that nearly all careers going forward will involve an element of technology," says Maureen, CSC's chief technical officer of Corporate and Legal Services (CLS). "Learning as much as you can about technology will be important regardless of what you do."

"Some of the fields we discussed included medical areas, teaching, art, science, design—all have an important element of technology," she adds.

Chrissy, a senior technology manager with CLS, agrees. "A technology career is more than being a developer" she says. "And it isn't just for men. Many different areas provide paths to grow and excel." Chrissy notes that there are more women in tech jobs at CSC than when she started almost eight years ago. "Women definitely have more of a presence, but I don't think about [the gender gap] too often. I guess you could say that's a good thing."

Natalie Smith, a senior technology manager in CSC's Logan, Utah, office, says the company is always supportive in helping youth in her area, specifically girls. She's volunteered as a coach for the local high school softball team and says she's had multiple conversations with her players about careers in technology.

"I gave all the graduating seniors a book called 'The Confidence Code for Girls,'" says Natalie. Written by journalists Katty Kay and Claire Shipman, the book explains the science and art of self-assurance. It's not that girls aren't smart enough to work in technology, Natalie says, it's that sometimes they may lack confidence in their abilities. "I highly encourage a woman who hasn't considered technology to read that book because it talks about some of the preconceived notions in the field. It might get them to think about why they haven't considered a career in technology."

Natalie also suggests girls take free courses at [Pluralsight.com](https://www.pluralsight.com), which offers training for software developers, IT administrators, and other jobs in the technical field. "They have some free courses online with hands-on learning," she says. "When you do a hands-on tutorial, it's supposed to be difficult. But they walk you through it. Anybody can work in technology. I encourage girls to give it a shot, read the book, and see if they like it."

When Marsha meets with high school girls to discuss career options, the senior technology manager with CLS talks about all the different areas touched by technology. "If you love to draw, then you can go into graphic design," she tells them. "If you love math and solving puzzles, then software development is good for you. If you're great at coming up with ideas about how to make something better, then architecture may be another avenue for you to pursue."

"There are so many areas in technology that are open to you, which can set you up for a successful future," she says. "And as we've learned from this pandemic, remote working is a way of life. This too, can't happen without technology."

A career in technology, along with anything in the medical field, is practically recession-proof, Marsha adds. "There are so many opportunities. I advise girls and women to stick with it because it's going to be difficult and challenging. But it's so rewarding at the end."

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Marsha Auld-Saunders



Maureen Padgett



Chrissy Begatto