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GUTS y Girls engages tomorrow's women in science & math

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SFI is leading a three-year, NSF-sponsored program designed to attract New Mexico girls to careers in science, technology, engineering, math, and information and communications technology -- fields in which women are historically under-represented.

"Learning technical and computing skills will give young people the background needed to succeed in these fields," says [Irene Lee](#), SFI principal investigator for GUTS y Girls, which will provide extramural curricula for some 300 middle school girls. If successful, she says, the program could serve as a national model.

Once-a-month Saturday workshops in Santa Fe will offer girls the opportunity to meet women scientists and professionals, participate in hands-on projects, and learn about career options. Two-week summer workshops are being held in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Las Cruces.

The program is an outgrowth of the successful 4-year-old, SFI-led [Project GUTS](#) (Growing Up Thinking Scientifically), an after-school program designed to encourage young people to ask questions about issues that affect their communities, investigate them through scientific inquiry, and devise potential solutions by modeling and analyzing them as complex systems.

GUTS y Girls includes a research component. Because girls tend to succeed when they see others like them succeeding, the program enlists women scientists as mentors and keeps girls and their mentors connected through a private social networking site. The research will investigate whether these activities promote and sustain girls' interest in science and math over time.

The program is a collaboration among SFI, MIT, the University of New Mexico, New Mexico Tech, New Mexico State University, the Santa Fe Complex, the Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails, the Supercomputing Challenge, and New Mexico schools.

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