If the Treasure Coast has become the mecca for all things science, technology, engineering and mathematics, then - more specifically and with all due respect - St. Lucie County is the capital.

With the likes of FAU/ Harbor Branch, IRSC’s STEM Center, Keiser University’s bio-technology, Team ORCA, Torrey Pines, VGTI and many others, it’s no wonder the area is crawling with “achievers.”

On May 10, four such achievers will be recognized for their accomplishments and successes in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics when the Girl Scout Council of SE Florida hosts its inaugural Gems of STEM luncheon to benefit Girl Scouting in St. Lucie County.

In what has traditionally been male dominated fields of study, it is four amazing women who will receive the first-ever Gems of STEM awards.

SCIENCE

Tracy Griffin, Marine Science Educator, FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute

Tracy Griffin believes education and public outreach are integral components of research and conservation and that is why she chooses to teach Marine Science at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute at Florida Atlantic University. Currently, her main focus is working with St. Lucie County high school students from Fort Pierce Westwood and Lincoln Park Academy, affording them the opportunity to participate in lab and field activities on the HBOI campus. Tracy is tasked with developing and implementing activities that coincide with curriculum for Physics, Chemistry, AP Environmental Science, AP Physics and IB Biology.

TECHNOLOGY

Llanie Ranzer Nobile, Ph.D., University Department Chair-Biomedical Sciences, Director-Biomedical Sciences, Biotechnology

A perfect day for Llanie Ranzer Nobile is one when the light goes on for a student and science becomes exciting, ever-changing, delightfully complicated and compelling. This powerhouse in biotechnology is the University Department Chair of Biomedical Sciences and Biotechnology at...
Keiser University, introducing hundreds of students to opportunities in the fields of scientific technology and chemistry.

ENGINEERING

Patricia Roebling, Interim Assistant City Manager/City Engineer for the City of Port St. Lucie

Patricia graduated as a Civil Engineer in 1982 from Florida International University and went into private practice for a few years. In the early 1990s, she went to work for Martin County Utilities, and in 1995, became the Assistant City Engineer in Port St. Lucie where the late Walter England became her mentor. In 2009, she was designated City Engineer and in 2012 oversaw the combination of the Public Works and Engineering departments.

MATHEMATICS

Sophia Wilberscheid, Assistant Chair Associate Professor, Computer Sciences Indian River State College

Sophia Wilberscheid’s love of solving puzzles and playing games led to a love of math and computers. After working for Pratt & Whitney for seven-years as a computer specialist, she realized that she really wanted to be a teacher and began to pursue that goal by earning A.A. and A.S. degrees from Indian River State College, a B.S. in Mathematics from the University of Central Florida, and an M.S. in Applied Mathematics (with High Honors) from the Florida Institute of Technology.

Emceed by Amy Brunjes of Florida Power & Light Co., the Gems of STEM luncheon will feature ORCA’s Dr. Edie Widder as the guest speaker. She will discuss her recent expeditions and who most influenced her as a young woman. Girl Scouts will be seated at each table to give you a glimpse into what scouting means to them.

The first-ever Julia Jackson Leader Award will be presented to a St. Lucie County Girl Scout adult volunteer who best exemplifies the strong characteristics it takes to build girls of courage. Co-chairs Kathy Post of Post Insurance and Sydney Liebman of Luminaries promise you both an interesting and fun afternoon.

Gems of STEM is from 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. on May 10 at Harbour Ridge Yacht & Country Club. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities remain available. Tickets are $50 per person and are available by calling Amanda Allen at (561) 427-0190.