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February 2022 I CAN STEM New Jersey Role Model Announced

Chatham, N.J. (February 1, 2022) The New Jersey STEM Pathways Network (“NJSPN”) is excited to announce its February I CAN STEM New Jersey STEM Role Model, Dr. Maria Agapito.

Dr. Agapito considers herself to be both a scientist and an educator at heart. She received a B.S. in biology with a minor in chemistry and a M.S. in biology with a concentration in molecular biology from Montclair State University in Upper Montclair, NJ. In 2013, she completed her doctoral training in neuroscience at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. After her PhD, she was accepted to the national institute of health IRACDA/INSPIRE Postdoctoral program. Dr. Agapito joined the pathology and laboratory medicine department at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and conducted research in the areas of developmental biology, neurology and ethanol toxicology using *C. elegans* as an animal model system. Dr. Agapito has published in various peer-reviewed journal articles, presented at various national conferences, and obtained prestigious fellowships. She is currently the president of the NJ Academy of Science, serves as Rutgers RUYES teaching fellow and Assistant Professor of Biology at Bard HS Early College – Newark, NJ. Since 2011, Dr. Agapito has served Kean University as adjunct professor in the School of Natural Sciences. Dr. Agapito’s long-term goal is to change the face of America by enhancing curiosity, educating, and mentoring students to enter STEM related fields. In this way, we can create a diverse population of role models for the next generations to come. We’re so honored to have her be part of our 2022 I CAN STEM Role Models!

Through I CAN STEM, the NJSPN aims to increase the diversity of New Jersey’s STEM workforce and academic pipelines. I CAN STEM will highlight diverse STEM role models so that all students will be able to see themselves participating and succeeding in STEM courses and careers. Each year, 12 I CAN STEM New Jersey Role Models will be highlighted, one each month.

NJSPN features both historical and famous I CAN STEM Role Models, such as physicist Shirley Ann Jackson, mathematician Alberto Calderón, and molecular biologist



Flossie Wong-Staal, as well as I CAN STEM New Jersey Role Models representing people of color, LGBTQ+ community members and women who work in a STEM field here in New Jersey .

The I CAN STEM New Jersey Role Models were identified through an online nomination process. Nominations for 2022 are closed and nominations for 2023 will begin in September. Anyone can submit a nomination that meets the diversity criteria and works in New Jersey in a STEM field. The nomination form will be available at njstempathways.org.

For more information on I CAN STEM visit <https://njstempathways.org/i-can-stem/>.

The NJSPN was created in 2014 and is managed by the Research & Development Council for New Jersey. It includes over 500 STEM leaders from across the State and connects all STEM stakeholders-K-12, higher education, non-profit, informal providers, business, philanthropists and government. NJSPN has six STEM learning ecosystems as part of an international network of ecosystems supported by the STEM Funders' Network. You can learn more about the Jersey STEM Pathways Network and New Jersey's STEM Ecosystems by visiting www.njstempathways.org.