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Kimberly McLean, Principal Engineer for Electric Boat to Receive Women in Science Leadership Award

Petit Family Foundation & Connecticut Science Center to Bestow Honors at Sept. 28 Green Gala

Hartford, CT- September 27, 2013 – The Connecticut Science Center, New England’s premier informal-science-learning institution is pleased to announce the winner of the first annual **Petit Family Foundation Women in Science Leadership Award, Kimberly McLean, Principal Engineer for Electric Boat**. The new award has been established as part of the Science Center’s ***Celebrating Women in Science*** initiative, this award recognizes exceptional leadership in promoting participation and interest of women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math).

The Science Center’s *Women in Science* steering committee selected Ms. McLean based on her extraordinary commitment to mentorship, encouraging hundreds of young women to explore science and engineering as a volunteer with the Girl Scouts of Connecticut.

Kimberly McLean is a Principal Engineer at Electric Boat. For the past 16 years, Ms. McLean has volunteered for the Girl Scouts of Connecticut, developing her own annual events and activities. She is also a founding member of the Society for Women Engineers New England Shoreline Section.

“I am very excited and honored to be the first recipient of this award,” said Kimberly McLean. “STEM careers give girls an opportunity to make a difference in their lives and make the world a better place. It is important to me to encourage girls to pursue science and engineering just as I was encouraged by others many years ago.”

Ms McLean was one of four finalists selected by the Science Center’s Women in Science steering committee. The steering committee is a group of community leaders who are already transforming the possibilities for women in the sciences through their own work and advocacy.

“This was an incredibly difficult decision for our steering committee,” said Roxanne Grabinski, Project Coordinator at Covidien and Women In Science Steering Committee Member. “All four of the finalists are making such an important impact on our community, going well above and beyond to mentor and inspire young women to explore careers in science. We congratulate Kimberly McLean on her success and her commitment to advancing others in the exploration of STEM fields.”

The new award will be presented tomorrow evening at the Connecticut Science Center’s Green Gala. The award is part of the Science Center’s Celebrating Women in Science initiative, a two year effort to raise the profile of women in the sciences and encourage girls and young women to pursue studies and careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

"Ms. McLean represents the best in Connecticut in the STEM fields. She is an excellent mentor and true teacher. Helping others learn sciences creates a stronger and more vibrant society for all of us," said Dr. William Petit. "She is truly kind and selflessly helps others -- much as Jennifer, Hayley and Michaela did during their lives. The Petit Family Foundation is honored to be associated with Ms. McLean and the Connecticut Science Center."

The Connecticut Science Center is dedicated to lifelong learning through interactive and innovative experiences that explore our changing world through science. The Green Gala is the Connecticut Science Center's signature annual event for science learning. Drawing more than 50 sponsors and 700 guests, event proceeds fund the Science Center's work to bring scientific concepts alive for children and adults. Since opening in 2009, more than 1.3 million people have been served by the organization's exciting and educational programming.

The Green Gala features delicious tapas dining on every floor, full bars and dancing. Tickets are \$175 each and available on the Science Center's website at www.CTScienceCenter.org/gala. Benefactor ticketholders (\$250 each) are invited to a pre-event President's Champagne Reception from 6 PM to 7 PM, prior to the event. President's Reception attendees will be joined by honored guest Jared Cohen and receive a signed copy of his best-seller, *The New Digital Age*. The Leadership Awards for Science Education and Women in Science will be presented at 9:45 PM.

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About the Connecticut Science Center The LEED-Gold certified Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, sparks creative imagination and an appreciation for science by immersing visitors in fun and educational hands-on, minds-on interactive experiences while maintaining an environmentally conscious presence. Serving more than 1,300,000 people since opening in 2009, the Science Center features 165 hands-on exhibits in 10 galleries and a range of topics, including space and earth sciences, physical sciences, biology, the Connecticut River watershed, alternative energy sources, Connecticut inventors and innovations, a children's gallery, and much more. Other features include four educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, function room, gift store and café, and ongoing events for all ages. The Science Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England, providing learning opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration. The Connecticut Science Center is also home to the **Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers**, providing powerful professional development for educators. More information: www.CTScienceCenter.org or 860.SCIENCE.

About the Petit Family Foundation The Petit Family Foundation honors the memories of Jennifer Hawke-Petit, Hayley Elizabeth Petit, and Michaela Rose Petit by continuing the kindness, idealism, and activism that defined their lives. The Foundation's funds are given to foster the education of young people, especially women in the science; to improve the lives of those affected by chronic illness; and to support efforts to protect and help those affected by violence. www.PetitFamilyFoundation.org

About Celebrating Women in Science Initiative The Connecticut Science Center's ***Celebrating Women in Science*** Initiative draws attention to the accomplishments of women in the sciences as well as inspire girls and young women to pursue interests in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields of study and career paths. The initiative is a joint effort with the **Petit Family Foundation**, which has joined with the Science Center as the Founding Sponsor of this initiative.