greenlight for girls
*The future is full of possibilities*

# PRESS RELEASE

## New York school sets the example for inspiring science learning in the classroom

**New York, 31 October 2014:** With the support of the ASML Foundation, greenlight for girls, an international non-profit organisation headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, helped to launch their first ever event in the New York region thanks to an inspiring team of educators. Andrea Dewey Urmston, 5th grade teacher from the Circleville Elementary School, led the project to create a day of science fun and learning in their school. With a dedicated team of fellow teachers in New York and the g4g worldwide team, the idea of linking science to Halloween was born and now sets an excellent example that any school could follow to help inspire their students to continue and expand their STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education.

The goal of this greenlight for girls' event was to show that science is linked to everything around us – including Halloween! Support from greenlight for girls and its partners enabled the team to assemble workshop materials needed to create several STEM experiments in every classroom. Students from the school then had the chance to "trick-or-treat" for science as they moved from one room to another.

Project Leader Andrea Dewey Urmston explains it best, "What do you get when you take the following and mix well: eager 5th graders in pajamas, enthusiastic teachers (also in pajamas), transformed classrooms, Notebooks and glow sticks and Halloween? You get an amazing day of inquiry, discovery, teamwork, learning, and FUN!" Andrea further explains some of the experiments conducted throughout the day.

Rotating from classroom to classroom throughout the day, students enjoyed each of the four activities:

- Candy structure engineering (toothpicks, marshmallows, and Starburst candies): What shape created the strongest base? How tall could you build your candy structure?
- Salt dough recipe math: What proportion of flour and salt would create the best dough? How much water was needed to make it work? What science or Halloween cookie cutter shapes were the coolest?
- Buoyancy and dissolving pumpkins: Would gumdrop pumpkins sink or float in water, vinegar, seltzer, or oil? What would happen to the pumpkins after sitting in each solution?
- Static electricity: Make tissue paper bats, pumpkins, and ghosts dance with the power of static electricity. Does long hair produce more static electricity than short hair? Does it

matter how long you rub the balloon on your hair? Do different types of paper create better results?

Andrea and the team were thrilled with the outcome of the day. "When you work with a collaborative team of educators, it is easy to make an event like this happen. We also got to know the other students on our grade level, which made us even more of a team within our school. The students really enjoyed being scientists and took the experiments seriously, despite the fact that they were in their pajamas on Halloween. Insightful predictions were made and many surprising outcomes were noted. It just might be possible that the teachers enjoyed the day as much as, or maybe even more than, the students. Nothing inspires a teacher more than those moments when you see the spark of learning ignite. This event was full of sparks. Of course, the chance to enjoy some candy while learning is always a bonus!" says Andrea.

She explains, "Due to financial constraints in our district recently, we do not have the luxury of as many assemblies, guest speakers, and programs as we once did. It is encouraging to know that organizations like greenlight for girls are there to help bring engaging learning opportunities to our students, as well as those all over the world. We were both proud and fortunate to be the first to host such an event; without pioneers, the STEM world would not exist. Someone has to take the first step…"

"The story of greenlight for girls began a little more than three years ago," explains Melissa Rancourt, g4g Founder and Chairman. "Our very first event brought 200 girls from all over Brussels and nearby cities came together to have a fun-filled day of science workshops. The success of the day gave us the confidence to create our events world-wide and each opportunity continues to reach more and more children globally. Now, three years in, we operate on 5 continents and have reached more than 10,000 students and engaged more than 1,100 volunteers. Today's event in New York again demonstrates how one person can make a difference. Because of the dedication of one teacher, Andrea Dewey Urmston, and her amazing team of teachers, they had the opportunity to inspire all their students to enjoy learning, to be curious and to build their skills in STEM so that they have more possibilities for their future. We encourage educators and schools around the world to be inspired from this event and create an opportunity of your own to show the fun in science. We are here to help you do just that."

**About greenlight for girls**

Greenlight for girls, asbl is an international organisation dedicated to inspire girls of all ages and backgrounds to pursue STEM subjects by introducing them to the world of science in fun and exciting ways. Headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, the organisation has grown immensely since its inception in 2010 now covering 5 continents, more than 1,100 volunteers and touching the lives of more than 10,000 girls. The greenlight for girls Board of Directors is a dedicated

group of science and technology professionals, gender equality experts and international educators, located in Europe, North America, India and Africa. Greenlight for Girls partners are individuals and organisations who share a common vision to make a positive difference in our children's and our society's future.

For press inquiries, please contact the g4g Founder and Chairman, Melissa Rancourt, melissa@greenlightforgirls.org.

*Figure 1: The students from the Pine Bush District found the contagious fun in science thanks to their greenlight for girls' day in their school.*