

*Written for Boundless Connections, a technology company expanding their business to build new tech centers in several cities in the Northeast US. This article is slated for publish on their website in January of 2018.*

The world is changing. Technology expands new frontiers every day, and with those expansions comes a need for new ideas, new software, and more IT professionals. Who will come to fill these needs? One organization is looking to help populate the tech sector with a resource currently untapped: women. Despite a few well-known tech celebrities, women are not flocking to the tech field, and She# (pronounced She Sharp) is hoping to change that. Boundless Connections is in the process of partnering with She# to begin new growth for the non-profit networking group from New Zealand, which is centered around getting girls excited about technology as their profession. It all began around the dinner table after the founder of She#, Dr. Mahsa Mohaghegh, spoke at St. Bonaventure University. Christina Lopez and Mike Marvin (our very own BC co-founders) attended the event and introduced themselves to Dr. Mohaghegh. It soon became evident that the two organizations, She# and Boundless Connections, had much in common. Dinner led to a natural discussion about a partnership to help She# to expand into the U.S.

In New Zealand, She# networking groups are already flourishing with over 500 members in Auckland since the 2014 inception. She# has hosted networking events which feature female keynote speakers around the IT industry, and has been successful in engaging serious sponsorships from Google and AUT. The business model for running these events? Host a female speaker at a tech-related company, encourage girls to come be inspired by a female role model, and then get the participants involved in real-world scenarios to get them motivated about working with tech. But this isn't just about the women; men are invited to attend, too...as long as they bring a woman with them. The She# events are meant to be inclusive of anyone who wishes to attend, with the understanding that a gender gap in the tech industry is still far too wide. Girls and women need to be encouraged, empowered, and excited about technology in the same way boys and men are now. With a little extra help, She# hopes to accomplish that goal.

What's next? Now that Boundless Connections is growing, the intention is to bring She# to the U.S. through the new Tech Centers and beyond. Boundless Connections sees the need for closing the gender gap in tech, and doing so by educating girls and women to understand how much they bring to the table. What's so incredible about this opportunity is the means for the tech industry to benefit from the influx of new growth which could be stimulated by the creativity and tech savviness of women. We know all industries are strengthened by the balance of gender, because when men and women work together, they balance each other's strengths and weaknesses. Think about it in terms of an example we've used in our workshops. Two people go to an event, one short, one tall. A barrier around the perimeter makes it hard to see from the front row, so the event coordinators are providing crates to stand on so people can see. Which is an actual representation of equality: give everyone in the front row a crate, regardless of their height; or give the necessary number of crates to those who need them in order to see?

When we consider the gap of how few women serve in the tech industry, it seems like we need to give more crates to the women right now. Google and AUT apparently agree, since they are

supporting the mission She# has begun in New Zealand. Now Boundless Connections looks forward to changing the landscape of tech in the U.S. as partners with She#, and the flood gates are about to open. If you're a woman who wants to join She# as a member of this growing network of female tech professionals, you can pre-register on our site. See details below. If you are part of a tech-related company who would like to host a She# event, we welcome you to contact Boundless Connections to get the ball rolling. You don't have to be the CEO to find out how to host an event where you work! We are also welcoming sponsors to contact us regarding She# events in the U.S., and look forward to growing the tech field while we shrink the gender gap. That's a founding principle of Boundless Connections: looking beyond the divide to a space where men and women work together, stronger and better.