

PROVIDENCE Journal

International Women's Day in RI: Shining a light on gender inequalities

Tuesday

Posted Mar 8, 2016 at 8:37 PM

Updated Mar 8, 2016 at 9:12 PM

Raimondo: "We have work to do. Women are half our population, half our talent, half our brain power. We need women at the table making decisions in positions of leadership."

By Jacqueline Tempera
Journal Staff Writer

[Follow](#)

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Sasha Floru, 13, is part of the math team at Lincoln School. Her team made it to the national competition last week, something she was very excited to share while tinkering with gears and pegs in class Tuesday.

But when the winners were announced at the contest, she noticed something was missing.

"The top eight winners were all boys," she said. "Where are all the girls?"

That was a common question on Tuesday when women around the world, and the state, celebrated International Women's Day. From Providence to Slovenia, Ocean State women used the day to champion their gender and shine light on inequalities.

At the State House, Governor Raimondo highlighted some statistics. Out of the state's 113 seats in the legislature, just 31 are filled by women, she said.

"We have work to do," Raimondo said at the State House. "Women are half our population, half our talent, half our brain power. We need women at the table making decisions in positions of leadership."

Raimondo, along with Senate President M. Teresa Paiva Weed, Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea, and Sen. Donna M. Nesselbush, vowed to continue to work toward equality in their offices and across the state.

“A woman never stands taller than when she stoops down to help another woman up,” Nesselbush said.

At Lincoln School, an all-girls school in Providence, teachers are hoping to reinforce the idea that women belong in powerful positions in all fields through STEAM-focused programs. On Tuesday, the middle-schools girls worked to make automatons. These are mechanical, kinetic statues that they create out of gears and pegs.

For their project, Blaisedell Frampton, 13, of Cumberland, and Lauren May, 12, of Lincoln, worked to create a mechanical giraffe head that would pop out of a box. They said they'd never done something like that before, and they were excited.

“It's challenging, but once you get a plan, it's pretty simple,” Frampton said while cutting out a picture of a giraffe. “It's cool.”

This is exactly what educators had in mind, said Suzanne Fogarty, the head of the school.

“Once they try it, some girls find that they really like to tinker. They can be a part of this,” Fogarty said. “They are seeing this in themselves, and in each other.”

Sasha, who was working on creating a whale that danced, said since she moved from a co-ed school to an all-girls school, she's become more interested in math and science.

“It’s just more encouraging,” she said of working in an all-female environment.

Deb Debare, from the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, spent International Women’s Day holding a training session for domestic violence advocates in Slovenia. More than 80 people participated, she said in an email.

“While we were here, we had the opportunity to visit one of their shelters and talk with counselors and victims, to see the universal struggles that we face around the world, in our efforts to end violence against women,” she wrote, adding that it was hard to capture the “exhilaration” of the day in a short message.

Women's History Month events in R.I.

Through March 31: Exhibit: University of Rhode Island Feinstein Providence Campus hosts "Women Artists Having Their Say." The exhibit features works by local professional female artists. For more information, call 277-5206.

March 10-26: The Out Loud Theatre hosts "Antigone," an original adaptation that tells the universal story of what it means to find your strength when the world believes you have none, according to its website. Call 277-5206 for ticket information.

March 16: Brown University hosts “Black Feminism, Popular Culture and Respectability Politics.”

March 18 through April 3: Women of Color Playwrights Festival, Mixed Magic Theatre, 560 Mineral Spring Ave., Providence. 305-7333; mmtri.com. Fri-Sat 7:30 a.m. \$15. In celebration of Women's History Month.