Alumni

Ask an Alum: Amy Schapiro

Amy Schapiro ’12SW is a contractor and leader of Women Techmakers, Google’s global program to support women in technology.

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Amy Schapiro

You have a degree in social work. How can social work inform technology?

Social work is a field that emphasizes relationships, empathy, and community. Incorporating these principles can help ensure that industries that build technology reflect diverse human experiences. Their products can then serve people in a way that supports that kind of diversity.

What are some of the obstacles that women interested in science, technology, engineering, and math (or STEM) face?

It differs based on various institutional and cultural barriers around the world. Often there is a lack of access to (or at least a lack of support for) educational and professional opportunities. Once in the industry, many women face obstacles like unconscious bias in company culture and policies, as well as lower pay than men.

What are some of the resources available to help combat those challenges?

There are a lot of great organizations that have been incredibly helpful to women in the global technology industry. For example, the Women Techmakers membership program that I developed provides personally curated resources for women and allies in tech. The National Center for Women and Information Technology also publishes a lot of resources to support women. The re:Work program provides training in unconscious bias and instruction guides on how to build effective management programs that ensure a supportive and inclusive environment.

What advice do you have for the parents of young girls interested in STEM?

There's a saying that "you can't be what you can't see," and this message is particularly salient for underrepresented communities. So I would encourage families to expose young girls to environments where peers, mentors, and role models are also involved in STEM, so they can see the possibilities. A lot of my work with Women Techmakers focuses on increasing the visibility of rising and established technologists from underrepresented communities. That increased visibility not only provides them with a platform that they didn't previously have: it also provides evidence that people from all sorts of backgrounds can thrive in tech.



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