



Embargoed until: 12 noon on Wednesday 22 January 2014

Inspiring Women: 100 girls 'career speed date' with high profile women including Samantha Cameron and Miriam González Durántez in Basildon

The Basildon Upper Academy is the **first school in the UK to host an event as part the national Inspiring Women campaign**. The campaign, run by the Education and Employment Taskforce, aims to get 15,000 women volunteering to give up an hour a year and go into a schools or colleges near where they live or work to collectively chat with 250,000 young women about their career and their experiences in life.

The "career speed dating" event is to gather 100 girls **and ten highly successful women including Miriam González Durántez, Partner at Dechert LLP, and Samantha Cameron, Creative Consultant at Smythson**. The ten women are:

Dr Margaret Aderin-Pocok MBE, Space Scientist
Christiane Amanpour, Chief International Correspondent, CNN
Clare Balding, Presenter, Writer & Broadcaster
Gail Bojarski, General Manager, Benefit Cosmetics
Samantha Cameron, Creative Consultant, Smythson
Miriam González Durántez, Partner, Dechert LLP
Mandy Hickson, former Royal Air Force fast jet pilot
Dame Tessa Jowell DBE, Politician
Chrissie Rucker, Founder, The White Company
Jennifer Taylor, Chief Operating Officer EMEA, Bank of America Merrill Lynch

Along the "career speed dating event" the charity which administers the scheme, the Education and Employers Taskforce, has organised a unique **careers fair at the school with 175 women doing diverse jobs from an electrician to a shadow minister, from a lawyer to an occupational therapist, from bankers to a plastic surgeon**.

Organisations being represented include; Aston Martin, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, BSkyB, CBI, Crossrail, Little Miss Geek, National Trust, NHS, Premier League, Royal Air Force, Sainsbury's, the Medical Women's Foundation and the University of Cambridge.

Basildon Upper Academy signed up to *Inspiring the Future* in 2013, wanting women from all backgrounds to visit and help inspire their female students and give them insights into different career options. The Upper Academy, which is currently in special measures, has recently been inspected by Ofsted. The Ofsted report is due to be published imminently.

Campaign supporter and Basildon career speed dater Miriam González Durántez, Partner at Derchert LLP said: *"Girls need to feel free to make their own choices. The main purpose of the Inspiring Women campaign is to reassure them that there are many female role models out there willing to help and that any option they take in life is valid if it is what they really want".*

Samantha Cameron, Creative Consultant at Smythson and Basildon career speed dater said:
"Female role models are essential to giving young girls the motivation and confidence to follow their aspirations. Volunteering at a school for Inspiring the Future is a great way of ensuring dynamic, ambitious girls, like the ones I met today, are given every chance to think about their future and live up to their potential."

The Director of the Basildon Upper Academy Sixth Form, Michael McCall said: *"The Basildon Academy signed up to Inspiring the Future in 2013 because we wanted different professionals to visit and help inspire our students and give them an insights into different careers. We explained that we were an Upper Academy with around 750 students, working hard with all in our school community to raise aspirations for our young people."*

*"Inspiring Women has given the school an opportunity to further support our female students' career advice and guidance, the school is constantly looking for ways to develop students' experience and knowledge, in addition, the profile of the event supports the Academy ethos of *Aspire, Believe, Achieve.*"*

"The world of work is changing rapidly and young people in the UK need to be prepared for future opportunities. We can all help to ensure they develop the right skills," **said Alex Wilmot-Sitwell, President, EMEA at Bank of America Merrill Lynch.** *"Educating the next generation is crucial for a strong economy and for successful communities. We are delighted to partner with Inspiring the Future and would encourage others to get involved. The charity's system is user-friendly; each personal commitment can be for as little as one hour, once a year and we know that the programme makes an impact."*

Andreas Schleicher, Deputy Director for Education and Skills at the OECD and special advisor on education policy to the Secretary-General, has travelled from Paris to attend the event at Basildon Upper Academy and will be launching a new OECD report on gender.

Inspiring Women www.inspiringwomencampaign.org was launched to connect women from all backgrounds with girls from state schools, because research shows that girls respond best hearing from other women. Whether an **18 year old Apprentice or a household name CEO**, all women can inspire girls to widen their horizons and look beyond gender stereotypes. Women working full-time or part-time, for large multinational or self-employed, from stay-at-home mums to the recently retired. Volunteers register to visit schools near their homes and/or work: www.inspiringthefuture.org.

The *Inspiring the Future: Inspiring Women* campaign is being run by small charity the Education and Employers Taskforce with support from Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

MEDIA CONTACTS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The Inspiring Women campaign

The *Inspiring the Future: Inspiring Women* campaign launched on 17 October with a 'career speed networking' event hosted by Miriam González Durántez at Lancaster House with 100 girls from 11 state secondary schools talking with 10 high profile successful women. The aim of the campaign is to see 15,000 women going into state schools, over the next year, to talk to 250,000 young women about their careers and their experiences in life.

The *Inspiring Women* campaign will run through www.inspiringthefuture.org, an innovative free national programme connecting schools and volunteers. Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, actor Joanna Lumley, CBI President Sir Roger Carr and other leading figures from education and business took part in the July 2012 launch. During its first year of operation, more than half of all state secondary schools signed up to use Inspiring the Future arranging careers fairs and other events attended by 100,000 young people.

What is *Inspiring the Future*?

Inspiring the Future is a free service which sees people from all sectors and professions volunteering to go into state secondary schools and colleges to talk about their jobs, careers, apprenticeships and the education routes they took. Everyone from Apprentices to CEOs can volunteer for *Inspiring the Future*. Volunteers and schools/colleges are connected securely online, and volunteering can take place near home or work as you specify the geographic locations that suit you. DBS (formerly known as Criminal Records Bureau checks) are not needed for 'career insight' or 'enterprise' talks. *Inspiring the Future* was established in 2012 with support from Deloitte and J.P. Morgan, and is being further expanded across the country with generous support from Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

Who is behind *Inspiring the Future: Inspiring Women*

The Education and Employers Taskforce runs the free, national Inspiring the Future scheme. The Charity was launched in October 2009 and has 10 staff. Its aim is to ensure that every school and college has effective partnerships with employers which provide young people with the inspiration, motivation, knowledge, skills and opportunities they need to help them achieve their potential and so secure our national prosperity. The Taskforce's Partnership Board comprises the leaders of the main representative organisations from education and employment. For details: www.educationandemployers.org

Bank of America Merrill Lynch's support for the campaign

Developing solutions for social and environmental challenges is at the core of Bank of America Merrill Lynch's responsibility platform. In more than 100 markets around the world, the company partners with employees, clients and stakeholders to make financial lives better. Bank of America Merrill Lynch focuses on responsible business practices, environmental sustainability, advancing opportunity in local communities through education and employability programmes, investing in global leadership development, and promoting cultural understanding. By harnessing our intellectual resources, sharing knowledge and connecting capital with need, we are providing opportunities that effect positive change. Learn more at www.bankofamerica.com