



Grace Testani, President/CEO of Creative Computing Center spoke at the Women in Technology panel presented to New York City public school guidance councilors. Below is the article from the NY Daily News

***"The computer fields aren't like an old boys club -- not yet anyway it's a chance to be creative in a wide-open situation."*** ~ Grace Testani

**EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN** - NY Daily News - Metro Section Jan 21, 1999

## **Helping women get techno-savvy - BIZ WOMEN talk with guidance counselors about high-tech opportunities for women** - By ALISON GENDAR, Daily News Staff Writer



**Grace Testani**, Creative Computing Center and Aliza Sherman, Webgrl

At age 31, Aliza Sherman runs her own high-tech media company. At 28, software engineer Sandy Eddy Polocz works to insure that Hewlett Packard's next generation of products looks ahead to customers' needs. And at 37, Tammy Jeffers is the link between human resources and information technology at Bell Atlantic.

All three women hope the paths they took to success can be inspiration for other young women to enter high-tech fields.

"When I was on the Web in the early 1990s, the other women I found there were all women in their 40s or 50s, and they were professors, scientists and academic people," said Sherman, president and founder of Cybergrl Inc., a new media entertainment company that develops programming and Web sites for women.

"It boggles the mind how in a few years, the Internet has gone mainstream. You can't see a bus go by that doesn't have a Web site address plastered on its side, but a lot of young women are still not sure what the opportunities are, or how to prepare themselves to grab them," Sherman said.

One way to get information out to young women is to grab the attention of junior and senior high school guidance counselors. DeVry Institute in Long Island City, a technology college that offers associate and bachelor's degrees, recently invited more than 40 public school guidance counselors to meet women in high-tech fields. While more than 50% of DeVry's business majors are women, the percentage drops below 10% in the more technical fields, such as electronics.

"I think many young women don't know the kind of job opportunities that are out there. They have that geeky stereotype that they would be locked in a small room staring at a computer with no one to talk to all day," said Ellen Derwin, national manager of outreach services for DeVry. "If young women meet dynamic women in these tech fields, that geeky stereotype is blown away," Derwin said.

Sherman, a military brat, had run a nonprofit domestic-abuse awareness agency, and worked as a music-marketing liaison for groups such as Metallica, Def Leppard and the Rolling Stones. But she was always fascinated by the potential of computers. "With the Internet, an individual could be as powerful as a multi-million-dollar corporation. I could publish a magazine online, or a million other possibilities, 'with very little startup cost. I thought, other women need to know about this," she said. Ultimately, Cybergrl Inc. was born.

Polocz caught the science and math bug as a kid -- spurred on by her father's support and her older sister's interest. But by the time Polocz was majoring in software engineering at Colorado State University, there were only three or four other women in a class of 40.

"Too many young women get lost along the way," Jeffers agreed. "I tell young women that information technology is a wave you can ride to a lucrative job." As a manager for data management, Jeffers bridges the gap between human resources and information technology, "because these two divisions don't speak the same language. People who have a technology background are in demand."

**Grace Testani, president, founder and CEO of Creative Computing Center Inc. in Manhattan, said she fell into her high-tech field the way many people now in the field did -- "almost by accident."**

**Testani's work in setting up employee training programs for corporations turned into a career showing companies how to create training programs on the Internet.**

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