

Background on UIC Daughters @ Work Day

When did Take Our Daughters to Day ® get started?

Take Our Daughters to Work Day ® was created by the Ms Foundation in 1993 as a New York city-wide program and went national in 1994 because of the enthusiastic support from adults. The program is now offered on an annual basis on the fourth Thursday in April.

When did UIC start participating in this program?

Office of Women's Affairs joined the national program in 1994 offering the first Take Our Daughters to Work Day ® at UIC. Because of the resounding participation by faculty and staff with their sponsored girls, the program was quickly expanded to include more tour sites and a morning program that featured a performance of a notable woman in history. The Office of Women's Affairs also renamed our program UIC Daughters @ Work Day.

Why did Ms Foundation create Take Our Daughters to Work Day ®?

Take Our Daughters to Work Day ® was created by Ms Foundation as a way to combat the reduction in self esteem, self confidence and ultimately career aspirations held by adolescent girls that was documented in research studies in the 90s. According to the Ms Foundation website in 1998, "they created a day of action because research overwhelmingly shows that one caring adult's attention can change the course of a girl's life."

Isn't this program just a career day?

The short answer is no. Ms Foundation's 1998 website stated that Take Our Daughters to Work Day ® was a day to focus on girls' abilities rather than appearances. They believed that a day at work, particularly a day watching women in the workplace, would help heighten girls' aspirations. –"It was a day for girls to envision the possibilities for their future." That is why the program offered through the Office of Women's Affairs begins with an inspirational performance of a notable woman in history that highlights her transformation from a girl to a woman who has made incredible contributions through her life's work. Tours of various departments offer an opportunity for girls to be inspired by a variety of areas of research, career fields and female role models.

Didn't Ms Foundation change Take Our Daughters to Work Day ® to include boys?

It is true that in 2003, Ms Foundation started a second initiative for boys and girls entitled Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day ® but again, this program's goal was not to be a career day. In the 2002 *Chicago Tribune* article, *Next year sons can officially join*

the daughters' day in the sun, Marie Wilson, then president of Ms Foundation, stated that: "Our foundation is about girls—But if you'd rather do children, don't just add boys and stir." The article also stated that girls only programs continued to receive Ms Foundations seal of approval.

Based on research that boys desired a balance in work and family life, Ms Foundation created Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day ® to provide a forum for these discussions and to influence future workplace leaders to make changes in the structure of work. This program is designed to encourage boys and girls to think about the challenges of balancing work, family, community and personal responsibilities according to the 2007 Ms Foundation website. Organizations are encouraged to have activities that facilitate solution oriented conversations about how to change the current landscape of the world of work to make this balancing act easier.

Why didn't the Office of Women's Affairs change their program?

The short answer is lack of resources and the mission of our office. While we agree that there are many programs that could be developed that would be beneficial to boys and work towards creating an equitable work environment, the Office of Women's Affairs has only one staff person leaving us without the human capital, let alone financial resources to organize an additional program for boys. As far as the mission of our office, the Office of Women's Affairs is involved with leadership development and equity issues for women. While women have made great strides in gaining equal representation in educational arenas, there are still majors and fields where women are woefully underrepresented. In fact, the salary wage gap between men and women still continues for new graduates in the same fields. We feel that it is important work on the pipeline and to provide a space where girls can be empowered and encouraged to dream about their futures without the interference that the dynamics of gender can bring. Given our mission, shifting the program focus to solely being a career day would mean that this event should be administered through a different campus unit.

Has UIC ever offered a program for boys?

Yes, in fact, the UIC Police organized a Take Our Sons to Work Day with the help of the Office of Women's Affairs on April 7, 1999. The director of OWA provided the organizers with materials and volunteered to assist the UIC Police with running the program that day for approximately 125 boys. In fact, any department can organize their own or a campus-wide program.

So can boys come to campus?

Although the program through the Office of Women's Affairs will remain solely focused on girls, faculty and staff can still bring their children to campus that day and have their children shadow them at work.