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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STEM nonprofit Girlstart partners with fashion tech company La Maison Steel

Proceeds from SmrtKuff® Apple Watch sales will support Girlstart's mission to increase girls' interest and engagement in STEM

AUSTIN, Texas (October 25, 2023) - Girlstart, an Austin-based nonprofit celebrating 26+ years of empowering girls through STEM, announces today a new partnership with fashion-tech company La Maison Steel. Through November 16, La Maison Steel will donate 20% of all SmrtKuff® sales to Girlstart to support its After School, Summer Camp, and Community STEM programs.

STEM challenges need new ideas and solutions, yet half of the world's population, girls and women, are not invited to the table. Women are dramatically underrepresented in STEM majors and careers, constituting 48% of the total workforce, but only 34% of the STEM workforce. Girlstart seeks to change this through its comprehensive After School, Summer Camp, and Community STEM programs, which introduce STEM careers to girls who have been historically marginalized. These evidence-based programs reach girls during the critical 4th-8th grades and provide the confidence and awareness they need to pursue STEM interests in elementary and middle school and beyond.

"We are thrilled to partner with a tech-forward company like La Maison Steel," said Girlstart's Executive Director Shane Woods. "Their commitment to innovation and empowering the next generation of women and girls in tech hits right at the heart of our mission. We can't wait to see what we accomplish together."

La Maison Steel is at the forefront of the fashion-tech industry. Their mission is to connect fashion with the value of blockchain technology and digital authentication. During Paris Haute Couture Week in July 2023, La Maison Steel introduced its new line of Apple Watch accessories, known as SmrtKuffs. The luxury connected cuffs aim to fight against counterfeiting while bringing more people, especially women, into the world of blockchain technology.

“We are honored to partner with Girlstart as our missions align so closely,” said Nicole Steel, Founder and Creative Director at La Maison Steel. “When I set out to create an original fashion accessory compatible with Apple Watch® , I could not imagine how heavily I would lean on my STEM foundation, not just for the design, but to work through the multitude of challenges along the way. For example: to be sure the product had integrity, we tested up to 16 Newton forces, which is why we invented a new connector and the implementation of blockchain technology for authenticity. If I had not been supported by a solid STEM education, I could never have brought the SmrtKuff® to life. Girlstart provides critical programming for girls to understand they can problem solve through these subjects to find a path forward. I hope our connection between STEM and fashion inspires these girls to innovate now and in the future.”

To support Girlstart and purchase a SmrtKuff® watch band, visit <https://bit.ly/SmrtKuff> and use code GIRLSTART at checkout.

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ABOUT GIRLSTART

Girlstart is a national women-led organization, offering year-round out-of-school STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programming for girls in grades 4-8 in Texas, California, Massachusetts, and other locations across the country. Girlstart's comprehensive programs are designed to engage, increase confidence, and introduce STEM careers to girls who have been historically marginalized by providing meaningful, hands-on STEM programming through after school, summer camps, and other community events. To learn more, visit www.girlstart.org, or follow us on social: [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

ABOUT LA MAISON STEEL

La Maison Steel, launched in 2023 at Paris Haute Couture Week, as the world's first blockchain native luxury brand and the invention of a new luxury accessory, the SmrtKuff®. While creating a fashion cure for Apple Watch®, Steel merged art, fashion, and technology to create a modern cultural-shifting brand rooted in exceptional detail and integrity. The Icon logo represents the Steel philosophy of authenticity, inspiration, innovation, and excellence. Led by founder and designer, Nicole Steel, the team spans Paris, Zurich, Madrid, Chicago, and Palm Beach. All Steel designs are born with a proprietary OnChain Verified process that revolutionizes digital product passports and authenticity. La Maison Steel has

approximately 150 global utility or design patents and trademarks published or pending. To learn more visit www.lamaisonsteel.com, and follow us social: Instagram [@lamaisonsteel](https://www.instagram.com/lamaisonsteel) [@smrkuff](https://www.instagram.com/smrkuff), TiKTok [@lamaisonsteel](https://www.tiktok.com/@lamaisonsteel) or LinkedIn [@lamaisonsteel](https://www.linkedin.com/company/lamaisonsteel)