My five-year-old son is learning how to do data visualization in his kindergarten class. I was excited to see that my mantra of “it’s never too early to introduce math and science” was being put into action in my own child’s classroom. The teacher even texted me a picture of the bar graph the students created, which tallied each student’s vote on who would win the Super Bowl football game in the United States.

There were 18 students in the class, and 17 voted for our home-state “blue” team (the New England Patriots) and then there was that one outlier voting for the other “green” team (the Philadelphia Eagles). Without knowing how each student voted, I knew in my heart that the outlier vote belonged to my son. I confess that I have zero knowledge about professional sports and neither does my son. He simply voted for the team that wore his favorite color. Subsequently, his team choice did win and became Super Bowl champions.

I asked my son if he was the only one who voted for the “green” team, and he told me that, initially, there were a few other students who voted for the green team, but they changed their vote. I was proud of my boy for keeping his choice and not changing his vote simply to follow the crowd.

It takes courage to stand out as an outlier among everyone else, and it takes courage to forge your own path. Does this sound familiar? These are the same themes conveyed to us from many successful women in engineering when we ask them about their personal journey to success. Here in IEEE Women in Engineering, our goal is to unite to improve the journeys for those young women that follow in our footsteps.

How many times have you heard, “If only there was some resource available to help me get through this situation?” The women featured in this issue of IEEE Women in Engineering Magazine don’t just ask this question; they have answered it with action. They have created resources to help other women avoid career pitfalls and built virtual community spaces that help women know that there is no such thing as an “isolated experience.”

For every experience, there are thousands who have shared that same experience. The ability to share our stories empowers us to change work environment cultures, which fosters better collaboration and, ultimately, impacts innovation.

Fairygodboss is an organization harnessing the experiences of women in the workplace to help future employees identify great work environments, while providing companies with constructive input on their workplace culture.

Meanwhile, the women founders of the organization Four94 astutely recognized that very little venture capital funding has gone into funding women-owned startup companies. The founders of Four94 saw the challenge and decided to do something about it. Their work is now helping to change the equation of success for women entrepreneurs.

In this issue of IEEE Women in Engineering Magazine, we celebrate the students who are providing the momentum to make positive changes for communities. We highlight an IEEE Engineering in Projects in Community Service (EPICS) work performed in the Amazon. These student volunteers have helped bring communications technology to remote villages. We hope their story will help inspire you to propose and volunteer to conduct your own EPICS project in your local communities.

Finally, we celebrate young aspiring engineers and scientists who have been recognized with IEEE Presidential Scholarships for their outstanding
achievements. Students have taken their personal passions and interests and forged a unique research path. IEEE Women in Engineering Magazine is proud to champion these fledgling engineers, who will inevitably become technology leaders changing the world and future IEEE Medal winners.

—Karen A. Panetta, Editor-in-Chief
IEEE Women in Engineering Magazine