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## AAUW Tech Trekkers Share Excitement from STEM Camp

By Jan Cushman



2015 Tech Trek campers Caroline Ruppert, Sam Swan, Maddie Wilson, Sophia Kofoed, Lynn Wolfe, Maddie House and April Lindblad. Photo provided

"My core class was forensics and I learned about fingerprints and chemical reactions as well as identifying different types of fibers," said camper April Lindblad, who attends Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School.

In addition to CSI forensics, core classes at camp included computer coding and cyber sleuthing, as well as marine biology, 3D math, and engineering design. The girls took apart computers, wrote computer code, built functional robots, worked as a team to make a biplane from rolled up newspapers using engineering principles, built structures using only uncooked spaghetti and duct tape, and took field trips to Symantec, a marsh, the Stanford blood lab, a virtual reality lab, and a solar car station.

"I loved the hands-on experiences and teamwork that I had to use in doing robotics and building with spaghetti," said Stanley Middle School student Lynn Wolfe, who plans to enroll in a robotics course next year.

OIS student Caroline Rupert enjoyed the visit to Stanford's solar car station. "We saw a car that was built and raced by the Stanford team," she said. "They raced across Australia and they got fourth place: the highest-ranking college team. Who was the driver? A girl from Tech Trek!"

The Tech Trek campers, all from Lamorinda intermediate schools, expressed their thanks to AAUW for their camp scholarships at a Sept. 1 reception hosted by the Branch AAUW Tech Trek Committee. To donate to the AAUW OML Tech Trek scholarship program, or to attend a Tech Trek fundraiser event such as the Walnut Creek Restaurant Walk on Oct. 6, contact Jan Cushman at (925) 253-1958. Visit <http://oml-ca.aauw.net/tech-trek/> for additional information about AAUW and Tech Trek.

Seven Tech Trek campers sponsored by the Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch of the American Association of University Women and the Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club, returned from their week-long Stanford University campus Tech Trek Camp with glowing reports of fun, learning and new-found camaraderie.

"It was incredible to meet smart science and math loving girls who are a lot like me," said Orinda Intermediate School student Sophia Kofoed. "Now, I know I am not alone and am going back to school confident in who I am and what I want to do with my life."

Tech Trek Camp is designed to encourage seventh-grade girls to persist with their excitement about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) through high school, college, and well into their careers. The camp features numerous hands-on activities as well as a chance for the girls to meet numerous professional women scientists and engineers.

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[back](#)

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