

Published September 20th, 2017

## AAUW Tech Trekkers thrilled by their experiences at STEM camp

Submitted by Jan Cushman and Sandy Fox-Sohner



From left: Katerina Bonderud, Kiara Kofoed, Maia West, Cathy Kenderski, Namratha Kasalanati, Olivia House, and Isabelle Lurie. Photo Sandy Fox-Sohner

Seven eighth-grade girls from Lamorinda and their families were honored Sept. 5 at a reunion and reception following their July Tech Trek camp experience on the Stanford University campus. Katerina Bonderud, Kiara Kofoed, Namratha Kasalanati, Isabelle Lurie, Maia West, Olivia House, and Cathy Kenderski attended camp on scholarships sponsored by the Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette branch of the American Association of University Women. The OML Branch has been sending middle school girls to Tech Trek camp since 1998; to date, it has sponsored 79 girls.

Tech Trek math/science camp is designed to encourage rising eighth-grade girls to persist with their excitement about science, technology, engineering and math through high school, college, and into their careers. The program features numerous hands-on activities as well as a chance for the girls to make friends with other girls interested in STEM and to meet professional women in STEM fields. At the reception, the girls shared that it was a very special experience to bond with "like-minded

girls" who love science and math and to see their future in a variety of possible STEM careers.

In the opening motivational presentation, retired judge LaDoris Cordell encouraged the girls to stand up and speak out for their values: to be "upstanders" rather than "bystanders." Core classes included computer coding and cyber sleuthing, marine biology, CSI forensics, and engineering motion. The girls also took apart computers, wrote computer code, built mouse-trap and balloon cars, solved problems using DNA code, measured vitamin C in chemistry lab, and attended field trips to a marsh, VMWare, the Stanford blood lab, Google, and Stanford Bing Acoustical Concert Hall. They also met numerous professional women scientists and engineers.

Upcoming AAUW-OML Restaurant Walk and Shredding Fundraisers

The Walnut Creek Restaurant Walk is scheduled from 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 3, with over 20 restaurants providing food. Tickets are \$30. Send your check made out to AAUW-OML Community Outreach Fund by Sept. 26 to Jan Cushman, 143 Meadow View Road, Orinda 94563 (jancushman@comcast.net).

Bring your papers to be securely shredded at the Shred Fest 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 14 at 5A Rent-A-Space, 455 Moraga Road, Moraga. Cost: \$7 per file box.

The American Association of University Women, empowering women since 1881, was the first organization to provide educational scholarships for women. See the OML-AAUW website for more information: <http://oml-ca.aauw.net/tech-trek/>

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