

Encouraging STEM

Feb. 26, 2015

MSU Girls' STEM Day encourages career lessons

Want girls to pay more attention to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)? How about by building math patterns in pennies? Or by helping them get hands-on experience with a model "nucleus" that can be accelerated and smashed to make isotopes that don't exist on Earth!

More than 220 girls from the mid-Michigan area attended the MSU Girls' STEM Day on Feb. 7 for a variety of Big Ten-sized experiences.

Sessions lead by faculty members and doctoral students, and nearly 80 MSU faculty/student/staff volunteers, the girls were exposed to various hands-on STEM demonstrations," said Teresa Isela VanderSloot, director, recruitment and K-12 Outreach, and MSU Women in Computing co-advisor.

"Evaluations indicated that the girls thoroughly enjoyed the diverse activities," she added. "Parents commented that they were impressed by the sessions, the faculty and student involvement, as well as how well organized the day ran."

Each girl attended and participated in nine sessions between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Participants were offered demonstrations specifically designed for them, including lung function models; solar energy; electricity and magnetism; using a Scanning Electron Microscope to play a match game; redesigning and restoring an urban stream as part of an environmental river project; seeing high speed photography of water balloons breaking; and looking at big and small animal illnesses as veterinarians.

In addition, many of the girls had the opportunity to visit three engineering labs: Face Recognition Technology, Composite Material and Structures, and Lightbot Puzzles and Programming Logic.

VanderSloot noted these departments were key contributors:

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- Mathematics,
- Composite Materials,
- Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering,
- W.J. Beal Botanical Garden,
- Cyclotron,
- Biochemistry and Molecular Biology,
- Mechanical Engineering,
- Computer Science and Engineering,
- Environmental Engineering,
- Chemical Engineering,
- Physiology
- Osteopathic Medicine,
- Physics,
- Veterinary Medicine,
- MSU Women in Computing,

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- and Society of Women Engineers.

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