

Principal Media Contact: DT Townsend
Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC
803.952.7566
dt-lawrence.townsend@srs.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Girls Get “SET” at Adventure Mini-Camp, Helping Area High School Students Discover Careers in Science, Engineering and Technology

AIKEN, S.C. – (June 22, 2016) – Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) and one of its parent companies, Honeywell, recently sponsored an adventurous summer camp on the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) campus to help high school girls understand the value of a STEM-based education (science, technology, engineering and math).

“The mini-camp is called Girls Get SET, where SET stands for science, engineering and technology,” said Patti Bennett, Program Coordinator for the Aiken Girl Scout Service Unit. “We also want to help them ‘get set’ for college, careers and life.”

The participants, high school girls from Aiken, Lexington and Saluda counties in South Carolina and Richmond County in Georgia, engaged in hands-on activities related to STEM topics. Girl Scout membership was not required.

One activity featured an engineering program that uses a pre-packaged “adventure in a box” called Engineers to the Rescue. During this experience, campers applied engineering know-how, problem-solving skills and design savvy to navigate their way out of a camping trip gone wrong after an earthquake. Projects



SRNS Structural Engineer Yara Soto-Toledo works with Madelyn Cooper, a senior at North Augusta High School, during a recent SRNS-sponsored a summer camp for girls from a four-county region near SRS to enhance the participants' understanding of careers related to science, engineering and technology.

News from Savannah River Nuclear Solutions

SAVANNAH RIVER SITE • AIKEN • SC 29808

included rebuilding their shelter on shaky soil, filtering drinking water and sending a message for help, while harnessing wind energy to obtain their next meal.

Makayla Harris, a sophomore at Aiken High School, stated that she was pleased with how the various camp activities tied into and helped to support her desire to one day graduate college as an electrical engineer.

“Probably the most important thing I’ve learned so far is that you have to be creative. You have to use your mind and come up with things on your own. Trial and error will help you get the answers,” said Harris.

“It’s also been inspiring to have all of these nice ladies, engineers and scientists, to listen to and learn from. You don’t have to worry about people saying ‘Oh, you are a female, and you can’t be an engineer.’ It just makes me want to work harder and do more to reach my goals in life,” added Harris.

Another activity was a Nuclear Science program called Girl Scouts Get to Know Nuclear that was developed by the American Nuclear Society. Campers learned about radioactivity, half-life, and fission through a series of interactive games and hands-on activities, including detecting radioactive materials with Geiger counters. “We’re excited to have the SRS Women in Nuclear organization on board with us,” said Bennett.

“In addition, we provided an introduction to computer programming,” added Bennett. “We believe it is important for them to have some basic knowledge related to information technology. In today’s world, almost any career will involve the use of technology in some form. Even if they’re not going to become computer programmers, being able to understand and communicate in the IT area is a valuable skill.”

The three-day, two-night event also featured a dinner forum with scientists and engineers from the Savannah River Site (SRS) and nearby companies to provide one-on-one career exploration opportunities.

“When I was in school, our counselors emphasized teaching, nursing and other careers typically associated with females,” said Bennett. “The primary goal of this camp is to inspire girls to consider careers in nontraditional fields and to give them a basic introduction to a few of those career options.”

A \$7,500 donation from Savannah River Nuclear Solutions covered the costs of housing, meals, supplies and a stipend for camp counselors.

News from Savannah River Nuclear Solutions

SAVANNAH RIVER SITE • AIKEN • SC 29808

Bennett expressed her gratitude to SRNS and Honeywell for sponsoring the event. “They strongly supported the concept from the beginning. In fact, the volunteer support from SRS employees has also been outstanding.”

“Honeywell recognizes the importance of a STEM-based education,” said Wallis Spangler, SRNS Senior Vice President, National Nuclear Security Administration Operations & Programs. “Summer camps like Girls Get ‘SET’ provide additional opportunities for students to further build their level of knowledge in these areas that will undoubtedly prove to be very important in life.”

For most of the girls, this was their first opportunity to sleep in a dormitory and experience other aspects of campus life at a college or university. According to Bennett, counselors integrated discussions on the opportunities and responsibilities of college life throughout the camp. “A lot of high school students are nervous about leaving home to live on a college campus. This camp hopefully helped to alleviate some of that anxiety.”

Bennett added that one of the nice aspects of this camp is that it creates a “win-win-win” situation for all involved. “The girls had an awesome experience, SRNS potentially influenced future candidates for STEM-related jobs and USCA had the opportunity to showcase their campus to prospective students,” said Bennett.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions is a Fluor-led company whose members are Fluor Federal Services, Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, including the Savannah River National Laboratory, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

Visit us on the web at www.savannahrivernuclearsolutions.com

SRNS-2016-481