



## SPAWAR Inspires Girls to Explore STEM Careers

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CHARLESTON, S.C. (NNS) -- Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center Atlantic (SSC Atlantic) partnered with the College of Charleston and Trident Technical College to get girls excited about Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) at a Girls Day Out Summer Camp July 25-26.

More than 60 Charleston-area students participated in the two-day event, which included a technology expo, interactive computer science and cybersecurity activities, business etiquette training, a tour of the College of Charleston campus, and meetings with college admissions.

The Honorable LaDoris Harris, U.S. Department of Energy, Director of the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, kicked off day two of the camp with her inspirational keynote speech.

"You are amazing," Harris said to the girls. "It's important for you to know that as we take our journey - dreaming big makes it happen."

Students said their favorite part of the event was the technology expo, which included hands-on activities and science experiments with representatives from six colleges and nine local businesses. Students spent 8-10 minutes at each booth participating in interactive technology activities over a two-hour period.

While the girls participated in the expo, parents learned about admissions requirements from colleges and universities and the importance of taking the proper courses in middle school and high school to prepare for STEM majors in college.

"This event is a wonderful opportunity for the girls," said Barbara Grigsby, high school teacher and grandmother of two students who participated in the camp. "I especially liked the cybersecurity activity because children today really don't realize the impact that social networking has on their future."

Throughout the year, SSC Atlantic deploys volunteers from its technical workforce to serve as role models, mentors, content experts, competition judges and other roles that show students the value of a STEM career.

"We devote ourselves to increasing the interest in, and participation of women and young ladies - and other under-represented groups - in STEM fields," said SSC Atlantic Commanding Officer Capt. Amy Burin. "Our outreach program engages students directly with STEM subjects through robotics tournaments, cybersecurity competitions, building remotely operated underwater vehicles in the SeaPerch program, learning through video games, mentoring in schools, judging science fairs and IT Shadow Days."

Female engineers from SSC Atlantic and local industry partners shared their backgrounds, explained their work, and encouraged the girls to think about STEM careers.

"I have the great honor and privilege of leading some of the most prominent computer scientists, electrical engineers and other STEM professionals in the Navy - and the world - today," said Burin. "The solutions we provide save warfighter lives."

SSC Atlantic's Executive Officer Cmdr. Marcia Ziemba participated on a Women In STEM panel with other female professionals in the STEM field.

"As you get into your curriculum in the computer science field, learn to understand the foundation of the technology," said Ziemba. "Learning to defend and secure your networks is absolutely critical. Focus on understanding how to use the technology in a safe and secure way so your information can remain secure."

A Girls Day Out Summer Camp was held simultaneously at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia July 26. Students toured the campus and participated in activities including a cyber awareness challenge, tower engineering design exercise, and bungee jump model.

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