

# Education News

## Brightening Young Women's Futures

(NAPSA)—The number of jobs in science and engineering is expected to climb to more than 2.2 million by the year 2010, opening a wealth of opportunities for today's young women—and a new resource guide may help young girls take advantage of these opportunities.

Statistics show an alarmingly low number of women in these fields. In fact, in 2004, only 25 percent of the entire science and engineering workforce in the U.S. was represented by women.

To help reverse this trend, the Optical Society of America Foundation, a nonprofit that supports youth science education programs in optics, the science of light, has partnered with the Girl Scouts of the USA to provide a supportive, all-girl learning environment that emphasizes hands-on discovery.

The organizations hope to alter statistics and directly reach young girls, exciting them about science and engineering. They have created a resource guide for girls ages 11 to 15 called *Lighten Up! Discovering the Science of Light*.

Through interactive experiments—including using Jell-O to understand how lenses work, making sunsets in a bottle and building their own telescopes—girls have the opportunity to learn about the world of optics and why it is so important to everyday life.

The guide also shows girls how the concepts they learn relate to research that affects them today and provides career profiles to



Photo credit: Girl Scouts of the USA

**A resource guide offers fun, interactive experiments to get girls ages 11 to 15 excited about science.**

highlight some of the many job opportunities in the field. A download of the book is available for free at <http://osa.org/lightenup>.

"The root of the problem with engaging girls in science, technology, engineering and math is that young women often feel these fields are difficult to understand and almost impossible to master," said Elizabeth A. Rogan, executive director of the Optical Society of America. "Through engaging programs—like those offered in the *Lighten Up!* workbook—we can overcome these fears and see more and more women pursue careers in all disciplines of science."

For information on this program, visit [www.osa-foundation.org](http://www.osa-foundation.org) and click on Grant Programs.