Parent Topics

Eureka! A Science Camp For Girls

(NAPSA)—"Eureka!" That's what many parents say when they find a camp for their daughter that focuses on science.

That may be the cause of excitement as more than 1,700 girls, ages 11-13, will take part in a variety of engineering and science-related projects at the week-long EX.I.T.E. camps across the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe and Asia Pacific, sponsored for the eighth year by IBM. EX.I.T.E. stands for EXploring Interests in Technology and Engineering.

"Traditionally, girls have shied away from taking math, science and technology courses because they didn't think they could excel in them, or thought the classes were unrelated to what they wanted to do in their lives," said Katherine Hegmann, IBM General Manager, Global Application Services, Business Consulting Services. "What many girls don't realize is that technology is providing opportunities for careers in virtually every field they could hope to pursue."

As part of this year's program, EX.I.T.E. Campers will work in teams with IBM employee volunteers on innovation projects allowing the girls to realize the wealth of ideas and talents they possess that could make a difference in medicine, health care, agriculture, entertainment, consumer goods, environmental preservation or rescue and relief efforts. Each camp will document its innovations by creating a three-dimensional model, blueprint or presentation. The campers will get a chance to present their innovations to local IBM volunteers and executives who will in turn provide feedback.

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING—One camp provides girls with hands-on experience in technical activities.

Since its inception in 1999, 85 percent of the more than 5,000 girls who participated in an EX.I.T.E. Camp indicated that they would consider pursuing an engineering or technical-related degree when they go to college. This shift in perception is critical for companies that depend on technical talent to fill key positions in addition to being timely, as evidenced in a recent survey by the Society of Women Engineers, which indicated that 75 percent of girls, ages 12-17, do not plan to pursue careers in math, science or technology.

When the camps conclude, girls can stay in touch with the technical women at IBM through an e-mentoring program. So far, most girls have found the camps to be an effective motivational experience.

Parents may want to contact their child's school to see if the school participates in the program. For general information on camps, visit the American Camp Association at www.acacamps.org.

To learn more about EX.I.T.E., visit www.ibm.com/employment/us/diverse/.