

TECH TREK



 **Science and Math
Camps for Girls**

Powered by  AAUW

Why Tech Trek Matters

"It opened the door to a whole new world of science and math that I wasn't aware existed. I definitely walked away knowing that I was destined for college. This is a powerful tool in motivating a 13-year-old girl to seek higher education and set goals for dreams that are attainable."



"If it weren't for Tech Trek, I might not have seriously considered pursuing a career in engineering."

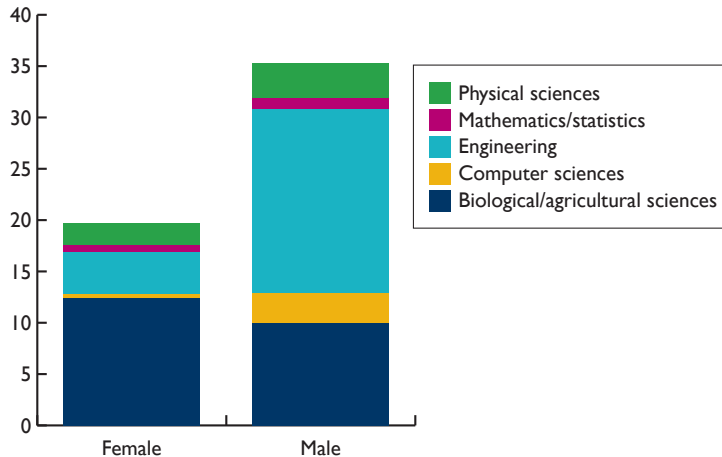


"Tech Trek was my only strongly positive, hands-on, make-science-real-and-cool experience in all of middle school, and I credit it with saving my interest in science. Thank you for helping me to never join the girls at my high school who complained that math and science were boring or pointless."



AAUW Research Inspires STEM Action

What percentage of first-year college students intend to major in science and engineering?



SOURCE: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California at Los Angeles, special tabulations (2011) of the Survey of the American Freshman cited in National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics. 2011. Women, minorities, and persons with disabilities in science and engineering: 2011. Special Report NSF 11-309. (Arlington, VA) Table 2-8.

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) research report *Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics*—one of the most highly quoted and authoritative pieces on women and girls in STEM—found that, compared with their male peers, women continue to major and choose careers in STEM fields at an alarmingly low rate. *Why So Few?* says that getting girls thinking at an early age about majoring and working in STEM is a critical step in widening the pipeline of women who are entering and staying in these fields as adults—a goal that is absolutely necessary to keep American businesses competitive globally.

Tech Trek has fostered girls' interest in STEM for 15 years. The weeklong camp provides an opportunity for girls to learn about STEM subjects in a fun-filled, hands-on college environment. For many attendees,

Tech Trek is their first exposure to a college campus, and the experience is instrumental in showing the girls that they can thrive there. The success of Tech Trek alumnae and their continued enthusiasm about the program speak to just how life-changing it can be.

The History of Tech Trek

1997

Marie Wolbach receives an AAUW Community Action Grant for a science and math camp for girls, and Tech Trek is born.

The first Tech Trek takes place at Stanford University and serves 150 girls.

1998

Tech Trek camps are hosted at California State University, Fresno, and the University of California, San Diego.

1999

Tech Trek camps are held at Mills College and Whittier College in California.

2001



Tech Trek Works



In 1999, a Tech Trek camp at the University of California, San Diego, became the turning point in Allison Wakita's life. Inspired by what she learned at the camp, Wakita went on to graduate from the University of California, Berkeley, in 2008 with a degree in chemical engineering. Today, she's a project engineer for AECOM, where she applies her skills to environmental projects in engineering design, air permitting, and petroleum forensics. She has worked on solar power plants in the Mojave Desert, analyzed oil spills in Southern California, and designed safety valves to avert chemical reactor meltdowns—all efforts that prevent environmental disasters.

"I clean up oil spills."

Tech Trek alumna Allison Wakita (above) works in environmental engineering.

Wakita says that Tech Trek gave her the chance to meet other girls who were excited about science and math and to learn how the subjects in her textbooks apply to real life. Of course, real life can bring real barriers. When she started working, Wakita found that even the clothing for some jobs makes women feel out of place. At 4 feet, 10 inches tall, Wakita has to buy special size-four steel-toed boots and hem 7 inches off her fire-retardant safety clothes. But she wouldn't trade her job for any other. At a 2011 camp reunion, Wakita talked to a new generation of Tech Trekkers about her experiences. A STEM education opens job opportunities no matter what the economy looks like, she said, adding that Tech Trek is more than just a camp. It's a place where you'll find other girls who love STEM just as much as you do.

Why is Tech Trek so successful?

Each camp shares certain elements that recruit and engage the best volunteers, teachers, and attendees.

- Tech Treks are overnight camps held at highly esteemed colleges or universities.
- Middle school science and math teachers identify and nominate campers.
- Applications are required, and candidates are carefully selected.
- The campers attend daily math or science core classes.
- Attendees perform hands-on activities throughout every day.
- One-day field trips enhance practical STEM learning.
- Tech Trek offers daily interaction with women STEM role models.



2005

Tech Trek launches at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Stanford University holds two Tech Trek camps back-to-back, and Sonoma State University hosts a camp.

2009

2010

Tech Trek starts at the University of California, Irvine. The University of California, Santa Barbara, holds two camps back-to-back.

A Priority for the Nation and for AAUW

AAUW has been a leader in the effort to get more girls interested in STEM, and the issue has been gaining momentum nationally. Even the White House has made STEM a priority. President Barack Obama said, “Reaffirming and strengthening America’s role as the world’s engine of scientific discovery and technological innovation is essential to meeting the challenges of this century.”

AAUW is especially concerned with the still-pervasive stereotypes and climates that keep women from contributing their skills in the STEM workforce. “As an untapped talent pool, women are a key part of the solution. Because women offer different perspectives and approaches to problem solving, recruiting and retaining them in these fields can open the door for new innovation,” said AAUW Executive Director Linda Hallman, who was a 100 Women Leaders in STEM honoree. “Diversity leads to innovation, and innovation leads to profit.”

By getting involved in Tech Trek, your company will be on the cutting edge of fostering and recruiting the next generation of women innovators.

Enough talking about the problem—let’s work together on the solution. E-mail us at stem@aauw.org to get started.

How to Get Involved

How can you be a part of this exciting program?

1 Give your women employees a chance to be instructors, role models, and speakers at a Tech Trek camp.



2 Donate lab coats, goggles, test tubes, and other workshop supplies.



3 Host a Tech Trek field trip that inspires as well as educates.



4 Provide laptops, video cameras, or other technology.



5 Fund a Tech Trek camp.



Tech Trek spreads to the University of California, Davis.

2011

2012

Tech Trek camps in California reach more than 8,000 girls.

Tech Trek spreads to five more sites nationally.

2013

Where will Tech Trek go next?



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