

## Tech Trek Interviews – A Heart Wrenching Experience

by Maria Asencio



More surprising than the shy or terrified expressions of a few girls as they faced six AAUW interviewers was the fact that most of these young ladies, ages 12 to 13, were composed, articulate and extraordinarily impressive.

A record twenty-seven Tech Trek nominations were received from schools in Palm Beach County. Eighteen girls submitted applications. The nominations and applications were the first clue that the evaluation committee (*Linda Windsor, Maurcy Selko, Donna Artes, Barbara Wagner, Sharon Trost, Diane Belleville, Maria Asencio*) was faced with a tough assignment.

Perfect academic records, glowing descriptions of achievements, aptitudes and attitudes, and thoughtfully written essays that could rival many University entrants.

Kudos to the Interviewers! A total of fifteen girls were evaluated on Saturday, February 27. The majority of the girls were excited about and actively involved with Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Sharon Trost broke the ice, congratulating and assuring each girl that making it to the interview was in itself an achievement. Interviewers took turns asking the girls and parents questions. The interviews were memorable and the evaluation session was one of the most difficult experiences of my life. Knowing that only a few girls could make it through final selections made me want to weep. My heart yearned to see every one of these amazing girls go to Tech Trek!

As an Information Technology Professional, I am passionate about the STEM movement. Girls and women are underrepresented in STEM fields. Tech Trek gives girls a chance to solidify a successful relationship with STEM at a pivotal age when girls tend to shy away from these prestigious, high-paying fields. Post-camp evaluations and follow-up surveys have confirmed that Tech Trek Camps have a significant and positive effect on girls' self-confidence, attitudes toward STEM, and pursuit of STEM academically and professionally.

Evaluations are now in the hands of the selection committee, but the work is far from over. The Tech Trek committee has a long list of tasks that includes fund raising, curriculum development, and recruiting of camp staff and volunteers. It's great to be part of such an important, impactful endeavor!

### Call To Action

#### ***Fund Raising Committee***

It costs at least \$1000 for each girl to attend Tech Trek. AAUW Florida has raised about half the budget required to include 60 girls in our camp this year. AAUW Palm Beach County is committed to supporting as many girls from our County as possible. We are actively seeking creative approaches to funding.

#### ***Volunteer Recruiting***

Get the word out! Tell your friends, family and neighbors. Now accepting applications for Dorm Monitors and Student Volunteers for the June 12-18 Tech Trek Camp.

<http://techtrek-fl.aauw.net/>

For more information or to participate and put your ideas to work contact Maria Asencio at [mdasencio@aol.com](mailto:mdasencio@aol.com)