



Lisette Estrella-Henderson, Superintendent of Schools
5100 Business Center Drive, Fairfield, CA 94534-1658
707.399.4400 ★ www.solanocoe.net

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Organization: Solano County Office of Education

Contact: Jennifer Leonard, Assistant Superintendent of Communications & Community Engagement

Phone: (707) 399-4429 **Email:** PIO@solanocoe.net

Solano County Office of Education Hosts Girls in Robotics Leadership Camps

Solano County, CA- The Solano County Office of Education (SCOE), in partnership with UC Davis C-STEM (computing-science, technology, engineering, and math) offered three five-day virtual Girls In Robotics Leadership (GIRL) Camps to middle and high school girls in Solano County. Two camps have been completed this week and last, with the final virtual camp being held next week.

Numerous studies and surveys have noted that the C-STEM fields have remained predominantly male with low participation among women. SCOE's GIRL camps are focused on motivating young women to learn computing and STEM concepts through a fun and exciting robotics and Arduino based curriculum.

"Our GIRL camps aim to address and bridge the gender gap in C-STEM fields," says Solano County Superintendent of Schools Lisette Estrella-Henderson. "It is my hope that these camps will encourage girls to dive deeper into coding and robotics and consider a career path in computing and related fields."

Students for next week's camp picked up their robotics supply kits today. Kits included a laptop, a Linkbot robot system, an Arduino-Uno board, ultrasonic distance sensors, a Barobo RGB LED cathode, a breadboard, resistors and other robotics and coding items. SCOE offers GIRL camps at no cost to student participants with financial support from organizations like Genentech, Valero Benicia Refinery, Soroptimist International Central Solano, Benicia Makerspace and private donors.

During virtual GIRL Camps, students are introduced to robotics, principles in engineering, computer science and C/C++ programming code. As the camp's name suggests, leadership is a key element of camp with emphasis placed on teamwork, kindness, communication, and strategic thinking.

Students meet women who have careers in engineering and other science and technology-related fields. This week, GIRL Camp participants had the opportunity to interact in a career panel discussion with women engineers, students, and other STEM practitioners from ENGIE, Northrop Grumman, and Collins Aerospace.

GIRL Camp also teaches film production and students create short videos using Linkbots that they program to perform like actors in the videos. Students then showcase their creative video projects and coding skills on the final day of camp to their families, education administrators, and community members. Lois Cross, Senior District Representative of Congressman John Garamendi; Paul Adler, Valero Benicia Refinery Director of Community Relations and Government Affairs; and Jim Kennon, Director of Benicia Makerspace participated in the culminating activities.

For more information about GIRL Camps, visit www.solanocoe.net/girlcamp or contact SCOE Director of Innovative Programs and Student Success Lilibeth Pinpin at lpinpin@solanocoe.net or 707-399-4439.

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Solano County Office of Education (SCOE) provides leadership, support, and fiscal oversight for charter schools and Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield-Suisun, Travis, Vacaville, and Vallejo school districts which serve approximately 63,000 students. Solano County Superintendent of Schools, Lisette Estrella-Henderson is elected by voters of Solano County. The Superintendent is a state constitutional officer who serves as the chief executive officer of SCOE and as a liaison between local school districts and the state.