

Mathnasium sponsors math girls day

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Mathnasium becomes the permanent sponsor of St. Mary's College of Maryland's semi-annual Math Girls Day

Lexington Park, MD – Only 24 percent of STEM careers are held by women, who earn 33 percent more than comparable women in non-STEM fields according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration.

This comes to no surprise to the Women in Science House Living Learning Community (WiSH) at St. Mary's College of Maryland, who hosted their semi-annual Math Girls Day last month. The program, open to middle school students from the tri-county area, has proven to be very popular, often reaching maximum capacity (70 students) very quickly. Unfortunately, the program lost its funding for FY16 and had to downsize the class size due to budget cuts.

Understanding the great value of Math Girls Day, The Patuxent Partnership (TPP) sponsored the spring session while searching for a permanent sponsor. "We are pleased to announce that Mathnasium has generously taken on sponsorship of this great program," said TPP Executive Director, Bonnie Green. "The importance of math skills cannot be stressed enough and we are pleased and fortunate to have found a permanent sponsor in Mathnasium."

The day included many hands-on STEM activities like origami, which builds spatial reasoning, attention, and patience. The girls also worked in small groups to engineer a marshmallow tower using only marshmallows, pasta noodles, tape, and string. This challenged the girls to use creativity and cooperation to build a strong tower that would support the marshmallow at the top.

Dr. Elizabeth Leininger, a neuroscientist, and WiSH advisor provided a tour of her research facilities and spoke to the girls about her work. Dr. Leininger focuses on bioacoustics, which is the study of sounds produced by living organisms. She led the girls on a tour of her lab displaying the animals that she and other scientists work with on a daily basis.

"It's so important that young girls learn that it's OK to be interested in math," said Dr. Leininger, "what we're trying to do is prevent and avoid the stereotype that girls do not belong in a STEM field. We do this by engaging the students in activities that are fun, that apply math to real-life scenarios, and that introduce them to role models in math and science."

Feedback from the participants was consistently positive with most reporting that they enjoyed every activity. One participant even said that the only thing she disliked, was that the day was not long enough!

"The Math Girls Day program is a perfect fit for Mathnasium community outreach and we are thrilled to be the program sponsor," said Kama Friedman, owner of the California (MD) Mathnasium. "Engaging students in math and math-related activities outside the classroom is a great way to demonstrate that math can be fun. Many students shy away from math because they think it's too hard or a skill you have to be 'born with'. Math Girls Day allows students to realize that simply isn't true."

A math-only learning center, Mathnasium, teaches kids math the way that makes sense to them. Their experienced math tutors utilize teaching materials and techniques to deliver a customized learning plan designed to address each student's needs, whether they started out far behind or are already ahead in math. Mathnasium's instruction approach goes beyond traditional math tutoring to develop understanding and build a love for math.

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