

Expanding Your Horizons Event Will Be Offered Again in October

Young Women Explore Science-Based Careers



The young women entering Debby Kilburn's seminar "They Play With LEGOS® in College" had to walk by an enticing sea of the colorful plastic blocks spread on the floor of a College of the Sequoias classroom. Once seated, the girls listened as Kilburn explained that students do play with LEGOS® in college – at least if they're enrolled in her robotics class at Cerro Coso Community College in Ridgecrest. Through a video, Kilburn showed the girls amazing motorized robots built from LEGOS® by her students.

After a brief introduction about the tiny motors pre-programmed to turn wheels, Kilburn challenged the students to build their own LEGO® robot ambulance capable of traveling a simple course. While some lost their wheels and others ran amuck, eight robots were built by teams of sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade girls in less than one hour. More importantly, participants got a hands-on look into the world of engineering and computer science.



Kilburn was one of more than 30 women from the fields of engineering, mathematics and medicine presenting to over 700 young women at the annual Expanding Your Horizons (EYH) event held last month. The Tulare County Office of Education and College of the Sequoias have designed EYH to help young women in grades four through eight explore careers in mathematics, technology, science and engineering. It also helps them form personal contacts with women working in professions traditionally held by men.

This year, Dr. Heather Moore, a molecular biology instructor at College of the Sequoias, was the keynote speaker. "It's important for young women to not only hear about careers based in math and science, but also to identify with the women, like Dr. Moore, who are leading the way in these fields," says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak.

(top photo) Debby Kilburn, an instructor at Cerro Coso Community College, led a popular hands-on demonstration utilizing robots. Her session exposed girls to the fields of computer science, engineering and transportation. (lower photo) Chaperones and teachers like Kim Webb were instrumental in getting girls from schools throughout Tulare County to the popular event, which will be held again in October.

For information on the EYH event planned for October 2007, contact Jane Mitchell at (559) 651-0562. 🍎