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AAUW Virtual Tech Trek Camps a success

Submitted by Jan Cushman



From left: Camille Bradley, Madeline Carpenter, Madeline Sheng-Williams, Kaitlyn Kinsey, Aria Falahati, Meher Jeyakrishnan, and Lane Massa. (Not shown: Miracle Gu, Maya Shu, Viviana Sanchez, Lils McCarthy) Photo Sandy Fox-Sohner American Association of University Women, Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch honored the enthusiastic eighth-grade Lamorinda girls who received scholarships to attend the AAUW California Virtual Tech Trek camps this summer at a reception at the Orinda Community Church patio on Sept. 17. The six girls who attended the event brought their "wearable tech" that they had constructed in the mornings of the camp. The creations included hats, a backpack, a volleyball and a belt. The other four girls created a corset, a fan bracelet, a fan mounted on a phone holder and a hat. They all designed and programmed their creations to turn LED lights on and off and to move objects on their creations using positional and continuous servomechanisms. Each creation was decorated to include their individual values, strengths and interests. The girls also had to learn about a successful woman in a STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) field.

In the afternoons, after a presentation by a woman in STEM, there were two hands-on workshops each day focusing on DNA, water, wind, constellations and

building a foldscope microscope and a spectroscope. Each evening there was another presentation on a STEM topic.

In addition to the 10 girls sent to camp, AAUW-OML branch member Sheila Apte and six former Tech Trekkers (Camille Bradley, Michelle Shen, Giorgia Stankus, Emma Wong, Jada Hembrador and Emilia Gutman) volunteered as camp counselors.

The girls said that they really enjoyed the camp workshops and presentations by women working in STEM fields. No one complained about the amount of time spent on Zoom since there were so many hands-on activities that the girls worked on alone or in break-out rooms.

Overall, Tech Trek served 639 campers in California from 94 branches at eight camps (six residential, two virtual) across California, staffed by a community of more than 230 volunteers, over half of whom were Tech Trek alumnae.

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