

Youth

QUESTIONS? Contact Editor in Chief Tom Bodus at tbodus@ivpressonline.com or (760) 337-3427.

Girl Scout STEM

event combines learning with fun

BY STEPHANIE CAMPOS
Special to This Newspaper

A four-day Girl Scout event funded by the Imperial County Community Benefit Program Grant recently served 100 girls throughout Imperial County. The first-ever STEM Summer Series was supported by Girl Scouts San Diego staff and local volunteers.

Ricochet Rec Center set the stage, providing the girls with a safe and cool place to have fun and learn. All activities and projects centered around three of the Girl Scout pillars: STEM, life skills and entrepreneurship. Outdoors, the fourth pillar, is covered at the annual High Adventure outing.

The premiere of this STEM Summer Series provided girls in kindergarten through 12th grade with a wonderful opportunity to gain hands-on experience in science, technology, engineering and math, as well as civic engagement, financial literacy and healthy living.

The girls did a community service project each day, designing cards of appreciation for military personnel and seniors, creating blankets for the American Cancer Society to gift to children who are ill, and making dog toys for the Imperial Valley Humane Society.

Each girl received a free backpack and a Girl Scout T-shirt, and she made a daily keepsake craft item to recap what she had learned.

If you have a girl who would like to explore STEM and projects that build courage and confidence through Girl Scouts, contact Nina Crabtree, membership recruitment and support specialist in Imperial Valley, at (760) 996-4497 or ncrabtree@sdgirlscouts.org.



Prepare kids early for a first job

BY MELISSA ERICKSON
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After babysitting or lawn mowing, a teen's first real job is a gateway to future employment. A wage-earning job is about more than just money. Young workers are learning the soft skills that will transfer to success later in life.

When is a teen is ready for a job?

"A lot of different things come into play in determining if a teen is ready for a job. It doesn't happen overnight," said Ellen Davis, head of the National Retail Federation Foundation, which runs multiple programs aimed at both students and adults looking to work in retail.

Parents should condition their kids to be ready by giving them the skills they need to work in common first-job industries including retail, restaurants and hospitality.

Employers are looking for workers who can maintain good eye contact, can have a conversation with a stranger, can handle feedback and criticism, are motivated and present themselves well, Davis said.

While the unemployment rate is low, it can be hard for an inexperienced teen to find a job without these skills. That said, retail, restaurants and hospitality do take a chance on teens without experience, Davis said. "Parents can start working on these skills with children as young as 8," she said.

For example, a shy child can be asked to deliver misdirected mail to a neighbor and be reminded the proper way to greet and speak with an adult.

"It's important to put kids in situations where they are exposed to adults who have authority over them but who are not their parents. For example, a soccer coach or a church choir



director," Davis said. Selling Girl Scout cookies or participating in school fundraisers can also impart skills that will benefit young workers, Davis said. Instead of a parent taking the order sheet to work and leaving it in the break room, encourage a child to do the fundraising herself in a safe way. A pair of kids can walk up to a home, knock on the door, explain what they're selling, collect money and make deliveries. "These are important social lessons left behind," Davis said. Before landing a first job teens need a basic financial authority, which can start around second or third grade. Parents should introduce their child to banking and discuss not only how much they'll make but how much they'll save or put aside for charity, Davis said. Youth unemployment is growing as a number of teens are opting out of the workforce, Davis

said. In the mid '90s just over 50% of kids 16 to 19 were in the labor force, according to figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Now the number is about 33%, and it's expected to sink to 25% by 2024, Davis said. Reasons include that "schools focus on academics, athletics and service to community," Davis said. And some parents are able to say, "You have your whole life to work. Enjoy being a kid." Logistics also play into teen employment numbers. When both parents work it's often not possible to drive a teen to an after-school job. "A whole population — a generation — is not working the jobs their parents had. They're not lifeguarding, scooping ice cream or bagging groceries. It's more than a paycheck. They're not learning the skills they need to be successful in the workplace in the future," Davis said.



Calexico High School Navy JROTC Cadet of the Week

Kevin Rodriguez

FAVORITES

Class: English, math, and welding
Hobbies: Playing guitar and piano
Sport: Boxing
Musicians: The Beatles, Nirvana, Ramones, Hombrés G

What do you enjoy most about the NJROTC cadet program?
What I enjoy most is the self-discipline we learn and practice.

Who inspires you and why?
My Dad because he always has goals and he accomplishes them.

What are your goals for the rest of the school year?
My goals for the rest of the school year are 1. be on the honor roll each semester, 2. Improve my welding abilities, 3. qualify for Naval Science IV, and 4. be a role-model student.