

Irish Girl Guides press release

14 November 2018

Irish Girl Guides marks Science Week by launching STEM badge

- Girls age 5+ are doing science experiments and engineering projects –

Irish Girl Guides (IGG) is launching a brand new STEM badge during Science Week (November 11-18) to encourage girls from as young as five to develop an interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

Hundreds of Ladybirds - IGG members aged five to seven - will earn the badge by taking part in science experiments and engineering projects, like building towers, making telephones using string and using magnets.

By taking part in these fun activities, the girls will learn about balance, stability and planning, how sound travels, magnetism etc. It is hoped that doing this will spark an interest in STEM subjects that they will pursue inside and outside of school.

IGG Programme and Training Commissioner Jenny Gannon said: “We are delighted to launch our new STEM badge for Ladybirds during Science Week. It complements the Science Investigator and Engineering badges we already have for Brownies (aged seven to 10) and Guides (aged 10-14).

“Girls aren’t always encouraged to pursue STEM subjects in school and we want to rectify that by introducing girls from a young age to STEM activities. Women are under-represented in STEM careers but we believe that, by encouraging an interest in these areas in a non-formal setting, girls will be more likely to pursue these subjects as they get older. In doing this, we hope to help address the gender imbalance in these fields.

“Taking part in STEM activities, like doing all Guiding projects and challenges, is also a great way for girls to develop problem-solving, teamwork and other life-skills while also growing in confidence,” Jenny added.

Some girls, including Bray Ladybirds, have been so keen to earn the new badge that they have already completed all the activities.

Sinead Bayliss, a leader with Bray Ladybirds, said: “The STEM badge is a unique opportunity to cover a wide range of topics in a fun, creative and informative way. Doing the STEM activities is a great excuse for girls to get messy with slime or oobleck, investigate with magnets and slopes, experiment with water and food colouring, play with numbers and stack or build with anything.

“There was a great excitement in the air as they set about the tasks, fascination as girls stuck pencils into bags of water and they didn't leak everywhere and infectious laughter as they mixed various concoctions from cornflour and made a terrible mess. This is the most fun badge we have ever worked on because the girls were so enthusiastic and the possibilities were endless!”

Irish Girl Guides welcomes new members age 5+ and adult volunteers from age 18+ (no previous Guiding experience is necessary). For further info see www.irishgirlguides.ie or tel: 01-6683898.

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Notes for editors:

Irish Girl Guides has approximately 12,000 members. Guiding started in Ireland in 1911 and operates throughout the 26 counties with 1,800 volunteer leaders providing an informal educational programme of fun and challenging activities that foster confidence and leadership skills in girls and young women, enabling them to develop to their full potential and to become responsible citizens. Girls from age 5+ can choose to earn a wide range of badges, including Community Action, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Drug Awareness, Online Surfer, Science Investigator, Engineering and Global Traveller.