

## **Clogherhead Brownies crowned Ireland's Top Brownie Engineers**

Aoife McGovern (aged 9) and her fellow Brownies from Clogherhead, County Louth, have today been crowned Ireland's Top Brownie Engineers.

In March of this year, and in the lead up to Engineers Week 2019, Engineers Ireland's STEPS programme placed a nationwide call out for Brownies across Ireland to take the 'Engineers Week Challenge' to become Ireland's **Top Brownie Engineers**. Brownies is the branch of Irish Girl Guides for 7-10 year olds.

As part of the Challenge, Brownies were encouraged to work towards gaining the *Brownie Engineering Badge* with their Unit and to devise an innovative project that could be commercially produced. In addition to including an engineer's design drawing and a description of the project in each submission, each Brownie Unit was asked to give a Dragon's Den-style investment amount required to develop their product, and to justify this support with evidence that it would be beneficial to their community.

Aoife and her Brownie Unit responded to the call and submitted a project on water conservation and reuse. This week at **Walshestown National School**, County Louth, they were honoured with the title of Ireland's Top Brownie Engineers and along with the prize of a STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) voucher for a professional workshop for their entire unit, they also were awarded with their *Brownie Engineering Badges*.\*

Congratulating Aoife McGovern and Clogherhead Brownies, **Caroline Spillane, Director General of Engineers Ireland**, said: "I'd like to offer my congratulations to Aoife and her Brownie Unit for their innovative entry. Engineering is about working collaboratively, being creative and finding new ways to solve problems and each team member displayed these qualities in abundance."

Clogherhead Brownies is a relatively new Unit, having established their Brownie programme only two years ago.

**Finola Dunne**, Brownie Leader, commented: "Working towards the *Engineering Badge* and doing the projects really gave the girls an insight into how engineering impacts almost every aspect of their lives. They used Lego to build, to programme sensors using a tablet, and they invented water conservation prototypes. Engineering is not such an alien concept now! I hope that doing this Badge and the Engineers Week Challenge, will empower some of the girls to consider doing some form of engineering later in life."

Speaking about their project entry, Brownie Team Leader **Aoife McGovern**, aged 9, said: "I'm really happy to have won, I've learned a lot more about saving water and realise how saving water is so important! I am happy to have been a part of it and I liked working with the team on the Lego project which gave me the idea for the entry."

The Irish Girl Guides, who worked closely with Engineers Ireland STEPS Programme, are passionate about encouraging their members - Ladybirds, (age 5-7), Brownies, (age 7-10), Guides (age 10-14) and Senior Branch Members (14-30) - to explore engineering and other STEM subjects.

**Helen Concannon, Irish Girl Guides Chief Commissioner**, commented: “Irish Girl Guides is a movement that always strives to move with the times and remain relevant to young people while challenging stereotypes. We believe in our girls' capabilities and want them to develop their STEM skills as well as a wide range of other life-skills. If we want to solve the world's challenges, we must ensure that both boys and girls can aspire to become engineers.”

Engineers Ireland's STEPS programme is funded under Science Foundation Ireland's Discover Programme and supported by industry leaders, Intel, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Arup and ESB. For more information, see [www.engineersireland.ie](http://www.engineersireland.ie)

#### **Editor's Notes:**

\*To acquire a Brownie or Guide *Engineering Badge* as referenced above, Guides and Brownies are required to carry out a series of engineering tasks ranging from spotting examples of engineering in everyday life to taking on an engineering challenge project. Since the launch of the initiative in 2018 (between Engineers Ireland and the Irish Girl Guides), over 2,500 young girls and their leaders have been introduced to engineering in this fun and supportive way.

**ENDS**

Issued by Anne Marie Clarke at Engineers Ireland, 01 6651300.