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Girls learn leadership lessons at Lebanon Scout camp

LEBANON — Girl Scout Madison Moore and her team at Camp CEO came up with an invention that lighted two small bulbs any time the user put their hands onto two apples.

Moore, a 15-year-old sophomore at Norwich Free Academy, used littleBits, small electronic pieces that connect using magnets, to build the device, which didn't have a name.

"We made a circuit and connected the two apples so that when you touch them, it lights up," she said. "It's really fun."

The littleBits engineering workshop Friday at Camp Laurel was one of many activities in the four-day camp, which paired the girls with women executives in different fields to inspire and teach them about leadership, character and improving their communities.

Girl Scouts of Connecticut operates Camp CEO every summer, its own chief executive officer, Mary Barneby, said.

"It brings them together with very successful, accomplished women from all over the state, with different backgrounds," Barneby said. "It's an opportunity for us to partner with the girls, to explore their leadership opportunities and also do a lot of fun things around camp and create the opportunity to have mentors, and individuals they can look to in their lives."

About 20 girls stayed at the camp, and female executives from companies, including Sikorsky, Wells Fargo and the Mohegan Tribe, attended.

The littleBits chief strategy officer, Jennifer Lawton, gave the girls a pre-workshop pep talk, explaining how she used her love of math to rise up in the technology field, dominated by men in the 1980s. She urged them to take advantage of opportunities.

"When you're offered a seat on a rocket to the moon, don't ask, 'Which seat,'" she said.

The camp began Wednesday and continued through Saturday.

Not only did the girls have to design and make their littleBits inventions, they also had to market it, giving a three-minute pitch for their big idea.

"We don't have a name for ours yet," Corinne Wilklow, 16, of Fairfield said. Her team's invention measured voltage from a small battery and sounded an alarm when the voltage got past a certain level.

"I want to go into aerospace engineering and design planes," she said.

Makalei Ohlund, 15, of Coventry, had a new littleBits idea to wake people up in the morning. She used littleBits to make a device that, in larger form, could be placed under a sleeper's pillow.

"It would shake the person's pillow and the alarm would sound," she said. "It would be a whole system. It would be awful, but awesome."



Left, Madison Moore, 15, of Norwich, holds apples to light up her team's littleBits invention with team members Clelie-Ann Ryan, 14, of Bloomfield, and Brooke Picciano, 14, of New Fairfield, at the Girl Scouts Camp CEO Friday at Camp Laurel in Lebanon. Ryan Blessing/NorwichBulletin.com