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Girl Scouts Reach for the Stars, Envision STEM Future at Pine Mountain Observatory in Central Oregon

Girls from around the nation (*including girls from Oregon and Washington*) to experience hands-on astronomy exploration, real-world skills thanks to NASA, the SETI Institute and the University of Oregon

PORTLAND, Ore. – July 5, 2018 – Girl Scouts from throughout the United States have stellar STEM opportunities this summer, thanks to the "Reaching for the Stars: NASA Science for Girl Scouts," SETI Institute's cooperative agreement with NASA.

"Girls will have a chance to make friends from throughout the country while sleeping out under the stars in a National Forest," says Shannon Joseph, STEM Specialist for Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington. "The girls will learn to operate telescopes, engage in solar and dark sky observations, collect and analyze data and flex their leadership muscles. And, while they're having a great time, they're also getting a chance to see a future for themselves in the STEM fields."

"This is an exceptional opportunity to embrace the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington and Pine Mountain Observatory into our scope of work," says Pamela Harman, Acting Director of Education at the SETI Institute. "The local Girl Scout council will deliver an excellent camping experience, the Observatory will deliver dark skies and observing opportunities and the SETI Institute will lead the girls through activities they can take home to their local troops and councils."

"Pine Mountain Observatory (PMO) and UO Physics are excited to support this new program! We especially look forward to having Girl Scouts visit the observatory for an extended stay," says Scott Fisher, Director of PMO. "The four-day excursion will give the girls a chance to fully engage with PMO and the STEM experience. It is my hope that all of our visitors leave the summit with a new appreciation for the universe we inhabit, as well as a genuine positive experience with the environment, the observatory, and most importantly, science itself. I hope to see these Girl Scouts pursue studies in Physics or Astronomy in the near future."

WHO

Ten (10) Girl Scouts from throughout the United States, including Girl Scouts from Oregon (Portland and Milwaukie) and Washington, will participate in an Astronomy Adventure.

The girls will join University of Oregon undergraduate women, the Observatory Director, and other professional instructors for solar observing by day, deep sky observing by night, and camping in the beautiful Deschutes National Forest of Central Oregon.

WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS WILL DO

- Operate telescopes and engage in solar observation
- Collect data, learn how to manipulate data into an image
- Explore fun astronomy activities
- Flex leadership muscles
- Develop new astronomy expertise
- Meet new friends from across the USA
- Sleep out under the stars in a National Forest
- Geocaching
- Camp, build campfires (*weather dependent*) and develop outdoor skills

[Photography](http://www.justinhartney.com/) by Justin Hartney <http://www.justinhartney.com/>

WHEN

Girls Scouts will participate in the Astronomy Adventure from July 10-14, 2018

Public Viewing

The public is welcome for viewing on the evenings of Friday, July 13 and Saturday, July 14, 2018. Programs commence at approximately 8:30 p.m., around sunset. Groups of 8 or more are required to provide advance notification. For information, scheduling and questions, please contact:

Alton Lukem Operations Manager, Pine Mountain Observatory

541-382-8331 | aluken@uoregon.edu

WHERE

Pine Mountain Observatory in the Deschutes National Forest of Central Oregon

[Pine Mountain Observatory](#), in the Deschutes National Forest of Central Oregon, offers a unique opportunity to observe the skies from mountaintop telescopes and learn about astronomy.

For more information, please visit: <https://pmo.uoregon.edu/>.

Live camera at Pine Mountain Observatory:

<http://128.223.164.214/view/view.shtml?id=83&imagepath=%2Fmjpg%2Fvideo.mjpg&size=1>

WHY

Research shows women are still vastly under-represented in STEM fields and exposing girls to these subjects at a young age is vital to ignite their curiosity and close this gap. Girl Scouts, the SETI Institute and the University of Oregon support helping young women succeed in working in these impact fields.

HOW

The SETI Institute is leading a five-year program called “Reaching for the Stars: NASA Science for Girl Scouts,” which NASA’s Science Mission Directorate will fund through 2020.

To learn more, please visit: <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/our-partners/SETI-institute.html>

“Girl Scouts, the SETI Institute and the University of Oregon share a passion for inspiring and empowering the next generation of female leaders through science, technology, engineering, and math programs,” says Karen Hill, Chief Executive Officer for Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington. “This exciting collaboration gives girls rare hands-on experiences that broaden their view of our world, our solar system, and most importantly of their own future potential in STEM and beyond.”

ABOUT THE GIRLS

Ten Girl Scouts – hailing from Arizona, Oklahoma, Oregon (Portland and Milwaukie), Maine, Massachusetts, Utah, Vermont, Virginia and Washington – will participate in the program. While they come from different places and have a variety of interests, from speech and debate to mountain biking, film club to violin, the girls all share a strong interest in astronomy, engineering and physics. In their own words:

“When I was little, I wanted to be an astronaut so I could explore outer space and perhaps even travel to another planet. I’ve visited two observatories and each time I get to glimpse through the lens, I fall in love with our world a little bit more.”

“This trip will give me the chance to explore the topic of astronomy and to ask specific questions about studying science in college and what to expect as a woman in the STEM fields.”

“In the future, I’d like to be an engineer and work with satellites and robots/rovers of NASA to gather scientific data to learn more about the universe we live in. This program will allow me to learn more about operating telescopes, and exploring the many scientific and engineering endeavors astronomy has to offer.”

MAKING AN IMPACT: GIRL SCOUT ALUMNA SECURES NASA INTERNSHIP

Programming such as this Astronomy Adventure make an impact. Participation in a Girl Scout Destinations trip to Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama in summer 2017 inspired Rosemary Williams, Girl Scout alumna from GSOSW Troop 20022, to reach for her dreams and seek a future in space science. Rosemary has attained a paid 10-week internship with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) this summer, and she is currently a mechanical engineering major at Oregon State University.

"Going to work at NASA has been my dream for a very long time," says Rosemary Williams, engineering student at Oregon State University and Girl Scout alumna from Troop 20022 in Oregon. "When I found out I would be an intern at NASA Ames Research Center this summer I was absolutely

over the moon. I am incredibly excited for this opportunity and I'm so ready to be surrounded by people who share my love for math and science and, most importantly, for space."

Rosemary Williams is available for media interviews by phone, or on-site at NASA in Florida. Interested media should contact communications@girlscoutsosw.org.

INTERESTED MEDIA

Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington's **STEM Program Specialist, Shannon Joseph**, is available on-site on **Friday, July 13, 2018** for on-site for media interviews.

Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington's **Travel Pathway Program Specialist, Jennifer Akins**, is available on-site for media interviews throughout the week.

Interested media should contact communications@girlscoutsosw.org.

ABOUT GIRL SCOUTS OF OREGON AND SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON | GSOSW

Our council serves 13,955 girls in 38 counties with the help of over 10,000 volunteers. The Girl Scout mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Every opportunity in Girl Scouting develops these essential skills in an all-girl, inclusive, safe environment. For more information, please visit girlscoutsosw.org.

OTHER GSOSW STEM PROGRAMMING

Girl Scout Astronomy Club Training At Goddard Space Flight Center—This week, teams from ten selected Girl Scout councils, including Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington, are taking part in an intensive weeklong space science training at NASA's premier research facility in Greenbelt, Maryland. Teams are made up of two high school Girl Scouts (*entering grades 9, 10 OR 11 in Fall 2018*), one Girl Scout volunteer, and one amateur astronomer. Participants will learn how to start their own astronomy club back home and have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to connect directly with NASA scientists.

To learn more about other GSOSW STEM program opportunities, please visit:

<http://www.girlscoutsosw.org/en/our-council/news/2018/to-the-moon-and-back.html>

<http://www.girlscoutsosw.org/en/our-council/news/2018/april-is-stem-month.html>

ABOUT GIRL SCOUTS OF THE U.S.A. (GSUSA)

The Girl Scout mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. The impact of Girl Scouts in the United States is reflected in the fact that 90 percent of female astronauts, 80 percent of female technology leaders and 75 percent of female senators are Girl Scout alumnae. To learn more about Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., visit girlscouts.org.

About the **GSUSA STEM Pledge**, <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/press-room/press-room/news-releases/2017/girl-scouts-announces-STEM-pledge.html>

About **GSUSA STEM Programming**, <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/girl-scouts-and-stem.html>

ABOUT THE SETI INSTITUTE

Founded in 1984, the SETI Institute is a non-profit, multi-disciplinary research and education organization whose mission is to explore, understand, and explain the origin and nature of life in the universe. Our research encompasses the physical and biological sciences and leverages expertise in data analytics, machine learning and advanced signal detection technologies. The Institute is a distinguished research partner for industry, academia and government agencies, including NASA and NSF. To connect with the SETI Institute, visit www.seti.org.

ABOUT NASA

NASA leads the nation on a great journey of discovery, seeking new knowledge and understanding of our Sun, Earth, solar system, and the universe. The NASA Science Mission Directorate (SMD) searches for answers across three overarching themes: Safeguarding and improving life on Earth, searching for life elsewhere, and discovering the secrets of the Universe. SMD's STEM Science Activation program advances STEM to improve U.S. scientific literacy through the leveraging of partners such as Girl Scouts of the USA and the SETI Institute.

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