



Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast Presents Cybersecurity Patch Event with Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin

Palo Alto Networks and Girl Scouts of the USA Educate Girls on Cybersecurity

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In recognition of October's Cybersecurity Awareness Month, Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast, Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, Palo Alto Networks, and CSU Channel Islands came together on Saturday, October 12, to educate girls about online safety, careers in technology, coding, and more. In 2017, Palo Alto Networks and Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) partnered to develop the first-ever national Girl Scouts Cybersecurity badges to educate hundreds of thousands of girls in grades K–12 about cybersecurity best practices and staying safe online. The collaborative effort is a huge step towards eliminating traditional barriers to technology industry access, such as gender and geography.

The event began Saturday morning on the campus of CSU Channel Islands, with the arrival of Daisy, Brownie, and Junior Girl Scouts grades K-5. This group of girls transitioned through different activity stations with facilitators from Palo Alto Networks, including:

- Daisy Girl Scouts (ages 5-7): Learned about protecting information online, how computers work, and engaged in a Web of Connections game.
- Brownies (ages 7-9): Learned about layers of security, went on a technology scavenger hunt, and participated in an Internet Relay.
- Juniors (ages 9-11): Practiced networking, Morse code, and finished with a Cyber Crime game.

At lunch, Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador Girl Scouts grades 6-12 joined the group. The afternoon session began with keynote speaker Assemblymember Irwin sharing her experience as a Girl Scout Alum, Girl Scout Leader, and Girl Scout mom. The Assemblymember's speech shared how the combination of her Girl Scout experience and education in systems engineering helped her establish the tools to understand the cybersecurity challenges facing our government and the business community today. She then engaged in a Q&A session with the audience before the younger Girl Scouts departed for the day.

The afternoon program for Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador Girl Scouts began with a career



panel of female executives from Palo Alto Networks. The women from Palo Alto Networks spanned various backgrounds in science and technology and discussed their unique career paths and experiences working in STEM fields, encouraging the girls to become the next generation of STEM leaders.

Panelists from Palo Alto Networks included Amy Slater, vice president of Corporate Sales; Vonnie French, senior vice president of Worldwide Operations; and Melinda Thompson, deputy general counsel and vice president of Legal. As the panel came to a close, the Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador Girl Scouts transitioned to their respective activity stations for the afternoon, including:

- Cadette Girl Scouts (ages 11–14): Practiced cracking a code, played a two-factor authentication game, and a social engineering game.
- Seniors (ages 14–16): Learned about running multiple programs, how computers hide information, layered security, and built a Rube Goldberg machine.
- Ambassador Girl Scouts (ages 16–17): Educated on different kinds of hackers, cyberwarfare strategies, and explored careers in cybersecurity.

The day was a success with over 100 Girl Scouts attending and learning about cybersecurity through hands-on activities and collaboration. Along with other girls and adult mentors, the attendees worked toward accomplishing the five Girl Scout outcomes. When girls participate in Girl Scouts and Girl Scout programming like this Cybersecurity Patch Event, they benefit in five important ways: developing a strong sense of self, positive values, healthy relationships, becoming challenge seeking, and community problem solving. To learn more about Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast's upcoming programs, please visit www.girlscoutsgccc.org/program.

About Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast

Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast serves over 8,800 girls across six counties and is committed to making the Girl Scout Leadership Experience available to girls in ways that impact their lives both in the moment and into the future. Girls participate in troops, individual projects, council events, day camps, resident camps and more. A variety of leadership, outdoor skills, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) based programs and events provide girls with opportunities to learn and explore in fun and informative ways. To join or volunteer in Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara or Ventura County, visit: <http://www.girlscoutsgccc.org>.

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