

Tech Trek Science & Math Camp for Girls Frequently Asked Questions - 2017

How many candidates are nominated? How many will be chosen for camp scholarships?

A total of approximately 50 7th grade girls are nominated in January every year by science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) teachers from the three Lamorinda public middle schools: ORINDA Intermediate School, Joaquin MORAGA Intermediate School, and Stanley Middle School in LAFAYETTE. Since 1998, AAUW-OML has sponsored at least one, and often two campers from each of the three schools every year. By Fall 2017, AAUW-OML will have sent almost 80 Lamorinda girls to Tech Trek camp.

How was my daughter chosen as a candidate for the Tech Trek camp scholarship?

Each year, AAUW-OML Tech Trek Coordinators work with administrators at the Lamorinda public middle schools. We reach out to 7th grade STEM teachers to nominate students to apply for a scholarship to attend Tech Trek camp.

What are the criteria for Tech Trek nominations?

We ask teachers to nominate diligent, responsible students who love learning, have strong aptitude and interest in STEM subjects, are cooperative leaders among their peers, have the self-confidence to take on challenging tasks, and might benefit from attending Tech Trek camp.

What is the process for applying for the Tech Trek camp scholarship?

Candidates must complete the Student Application, including a personal essay, and submit by email in February. Every nominee who submits a timely, complete application will be interviewed in March at her school.

How should my daughter approach the essay?

Relax, and be yourself. Use the essay prompt as an opportunity to tell us what is important to you, what inspires you, and what makes you unique! There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Always use your own words and thoughts. Use complete sentences; check spelling and grammar.

When and where are the interviews?

Interviews are held at the candidate's school in mid-March. Interview schedules are arranged by school staff. Your Tech Trek Coordinator will notify you of your interview date/time about 1-2 weeks in advance.

How should my daughter dress for the interview?

Wear comfortable school clothes, but be thoughtful about making a first impression. The group interview is another learning opportunity which few students will experience at this age.

What is the interview like?

Interviews are 15 minutes in length. Three AAUW-OML members, most with career backgrounds in STEM fields, conduct the interview. Questions are general in nature. Candidates are asked about their interests, favorite school subjects, interesting day trips or vacations, science experiments at school, participation in science fairs, personal use of technology, and special interests in science, tech, or math.

When will we be notified if our daughter has been selected to attend Tech Trek camp?

You and your daughter will receive an email in early April regarding her status. In addition to those selected to attend camp, an Alternate will be named for each school. Should a chosen camper be unable to attend camp in July, the Alternate from her school will be invited to attend.

If my daughter is selected to attend camp, but has a conflict due to family commitments, may she attend another Tech Trek camp?

No. Tech Trek camps and dates are not interchangeable. Each AAUW Branch that supports the Tech Trek project secures reservations at a specific camp. To apply, the candidate must be available to attend the entire week of the Grace Hopper Camp at Stanford University, where AAUW-OML secures prepaid reservations every year.

If my daughter is not selected for the Tech Trek Scholarship, may I pay for her to attend camp?

No. Only girls nominated by STEM teachers and sponsored by a Branch of AAUW are eligible to attend Tech Trek Camp.

However, we realize all Tech Trek nominees might benefit from a science camp experience. We have created a [Resource List](#) of STEM camps and activities. We do **NOT** endorse any of these programs, but provide the list as a resource.

AAUW-OML encourages middle school girls interested in STEM to attend our annual *Expanding Your Horizons* Conference held at Saint Mary's College in Moraga in March. This dynamic day is modeled after Tech Trek camp and is open to all middle school girls. Our goal is to encourage girls to continue to pursue science and math in high school and college, opening a world of career opportunities to them. To learn more, visit: <http://www.expandingyourhorizons.org/conferences/AAUWSAINTMARYS/>

Is there a ceremony for AAUW's scholarship awards?

Yes. AAUW-OML holds an annual AAUW Awards celebration on a Sunday afternoon in April to honor Tech Trek scholarship winners, local high school college scholarship winners, and one scholarship winner from Saint Mary's College. All winners make brief presentations to an audience of AAUW members, parents, extended families, teachers, and friends.

Attire should be appropriate for the special honors being recognized--a nice dress or coordinated pants outfit.

How many girls attend the Grace Hopper Tech Trek Camp on the Stanford campus?

Each Tech Trek camp serves 80 to 100 campers. The Grace Hopper camp at Stanford accepts about 80 campers, depending upon dorm capacity. Ten camps are held on eight college campuses in California every summer.

What is Tech Trek camp like?

Tech Trek campers often tell us the experience changed their lives! Each camp is unique, depending upon available facilities, resources, and local opportunities. All camps feature hands-on activities/workshops in STEM and related fields. Campers participate in daily core classes (assigned based on interest), attend field trips, participate in build-it contests, and have opportunities to interact with professional women in STEM fields. There are interesting activities and presentations every evening. No tests or homework! Campers have a very busy schedule, but they have fun!

All sleeping, eating, instructional and recreational facilities are located on campus. Campers experience "what college is like." They live in dorms, eat in the dining commons, share bathroom facilities, and learn to live with new roommates. They walk to classes, labs and facilities on campus.

What about health and safety provisions at camp?

Campers are supervised at all times. They are required to wear Tech Trek ID and stay with their group at all times. Camp directors, credentialed core-class teachers, AAUW volunteer dorm moms, high school junior counselors (former Tech Trek campers), and a medical professional are available for the girls during their stay at camp. All camp staff are required to pass background checks.

All campers are asked to complete health forms prior to attending camp (health history, medical and dietary needs). *All campers must be vaccinated.*

Campers are expected to follow all camp rules, and be cooperative and respectful at all times. They may not explore the campus alone, leave their dorm at night, or socialize with individuals on campus who are not affiliated with Tech Trek camp. *Any camper who does not abide by camp rules will be sent home immediately.*

May my daughter bring her cell phone to camp?

NO. After several years of attempts to accommodate limited use of cell phones in the evening, cell phones are no longer allowed at camp--to maximize the girls' learning experience. *If your daughter cannot accept this "No Phone Zone" policy, she should not apply for Tech Trek.* Adult staff will always have phones available in case of emergencies.

When should my daughter arrive on campus at Stanford?

You will receive a camp packet with specific information from the Camp Director about arrival date/time, location, packing lists, and driving directions. Parents bring their daughter to camp on Sunday afternoon and pick up on Saturday morning.

Will there be an orientation before camp?

Yes. AAUW-OML hosts an Ice Cream Social in June, for Lamorinda Tech Trek scholarship winners and their parents to get acquainted. Former Tech Trekkers and AAUW Dorm Moms will give a brief presentation, share their camp experiences, and answer questions.

What happens after camp?

In September, campers and their parents are invited to a small reception to share their camp experiences with the other girls, their families, and the AAUW-OML Tech Trek committee.

Tech Trekkers are invited to events to share their camp experiences, be group leaders at STEM Workshop Conferences, and track their success. Past campers are encouraged to stay connected to their Tech Trek network.

Why is Tech Trek so limited in the number of camps and available space?

Almost all aspects of Tech Trek are volunteer-based and funded by donations. Only the credentialed teachers who teach the core classes at camp are paid. Extraordinary efforts by hundreds of dedicated women committed to the Tech Trek project have built the ongoing success of the program, always on limited budgets.

One-time corporate grants have helped with the expansion of Tech Trek into a national project, after many years of growing success as an AAUW-California program.

How does AAUW-OML raise funds to pay for Tech Trek camp scholarships for Lamorinda girls?

Generous donations from individual members of the AAUW-OML Branch are the foundation of our Tech Trek scholarships. We are also grateful for donations from local charity groups and from parents of some past campers who choose to support future Tech Trek scholarships.

AAUW holds an annual community Shred-Fest, a secure paper-shredding fundraiser, on the second Saturday in October at 5A Rent-A-Space in Moraga. All shred fees help fund camp scholarships.

AAUW-OML also sells tickets to *A Taste of Walnut Creek* (a restaurant walk in October) and receives a portion of the ticket proceeds.

Are donations to Tech Trek tax-deductible?

Yes. Make checks payable to **AAUW-OML Community Outreach Fund** (a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization) with memo note: **Tech Trek**. Mail to: Tech Trek Co-Chair, Jan Cushman, 143 Meadow View Road, Orinda, CA 94563.

THANK YOU for your support!