

Tech Trek STEM Camp for Girls - Frequently Asked Questions

What is Tech Trek?

Tech Trek is a hands-on summer camp for rising 8th grade girls run by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) that sparks curiosity in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). This year campers from Lamorinda will spend one week on the Santa Clara University campus. Full scholarships are sponsored by the Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch of AAUW.

What happens at camp?

During the week of the residential camp, girls will live in a college dorm and attend daily STEM classes, perform hands-on activities, participate in one or more field trips, and interact with women STEM role models. The morning core classes are taught by credentialed teachers. There is one “dorm mom” for every 10-12 campers, and medical personnel are onsite. Campers will not have access to their cell phones or the internet during camp; dorm moms, teachers, and camp directors will have cell phones.

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

A total of approximately 30 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. This year two or three girls will be selected from each school. As of Fall 2024, AAUW-OML has sent 137 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 via the CampDoc software 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 March. Interview schedules are arranged in coordination with 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 15-20 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 late March or 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 camp at Santa Clara University, where AAUW-OML has secured prepaid reservations.

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 STEM Conference held at Saint Mary's College in Moraga in March. 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.

Is there a ceremony for AAUW's scholarship awards?

Yes. AAUW-OML will hold the annual AAUW Awards Celebration on the afternoon of Sunday April 27 to honor Tech Trek scholarship winners, local high school college and Saint Mary's College scholarship winners. 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.