

Girls can learn STEM, robot-building and programming in free BC3 events

Jan. 18, 2018

(Butler, PA) Girls in grades 7 to 9 can hone their understanding of science, technology, engineering and mathematics by building and programming the latest LEGO Mindstorms EV3 robots in two free programs debuting at Butler County Community College.

BC3 will offer for the first time a “Girls One-Day STEM Challenge” from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Jan. 27, and a 12-session “Girls Rule the World with STEM” from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Feb. 7 through April 25.

Seating is limited for both opportunities, which are free to participants as a result of the Arconic Foundation’s \$20,000 donation to BC3’s Kids on Campus program. The hands-on challenges will be held in BC3’s Business and Health Professions building on its main campus in Butler Township.

“It is extremely important that girls learn about STEM,” said Debbie Walker, a human resources generalist for Kawneer Cranberry Arconic Building and Construction Systems in Cranberry Township. “I think there is a stereotype that STEM and robots and the like are typically for boys. We want to expose STEM to girls at a young age.”

The Arconic Foundation’s gift to BC3 is the third since 2013.

“We have a great relationship with BC3,” Walker said. “BC3 has done so much for the community, and offers opportunities to students to get them involved with STEM at a younger age.”

Added Ruth Purcell, executive director of the BC3 Education Foundation: “You have to start early, and this is what we are doing here at BC3.”

Lunch will be provided and commemorative T-shirts available to those participating in the “Girls One-Day STEM Challenge.”

“Girls Rule the World with STEM” combines science, technology, engineering and mathematics principles with journaling and video production, and allows participants to investigate careers in STEM and in coding. Girls can explore the latest trends in robotics and programming – then put their skills to the test by building and programming LEGO Mindstorms EV3 robots and Moss Robotic Cubelets.

“The goal of our classes,” said Eva Lowerre, coordinator of BC3’s Kids on Campus program, “is to help girls realize the vast number of fields in the STEM disciplines available today. Many of

these fields have more male than female participants. Creating an interest in STEM-related activities will hopefully develop into a successful, fulfilling career for these girls.”

The challenges will provide an advantage to girls in an ever-changing STEM curriculum, said Paul Lucas, director of BC3’s Lifelong Learning.

“On top of that,” he said, “we hope they have a lot of fun and form new friendships with other girls.”

Registrations are on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information, call (724) 284-8504 or register online at bc3.augusoft.net.