

Girl Scouts talk STEM with SWRMC's CO



Girl Scouts visit with Southwest Regional Maintenance Center's (SWRMC) Commanding Officer Nov. 6 to learn about career opportunities in the Navy for those who pursue an education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Capt. Heide Stefanyshyn-Piper, a former NASA astronaut, presented the Girl Scout Troop 6110 members with their first of the three badges in their Journey, and discussed the childhood and educational choices that led her into the career she has today.

"I really enjoyed math and science as a child, but I really had no idea what a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Career was," said Stefanyshyn-Piper. "So, I hope that today I can show you how interesting science and math can really be, and you can visualize yourselves in an exciting career as a scientist or engineer."

Stefanyshyn-Piper had a humble upbringing with two immigrant parents from Europe. It is from those roots that the young girls can identify with Stefanyshyn-Piper.

"There are many children who are first generation Americans, and so a lot of the girls can see themselves in the Captain, and see the Captain in their friends," said Juri Peterson, Co-leader, Troop 6110. "So for them, it does show them that the Captain is just like them, so ordinary girls can do really extraordinary things when they grow up."

Peterson believes that allowing the girls' access to successful women like Stefanyshyn-Piper will help inspire them to follow their dreams.

“Without seeing their role models, girls may not know how to go about becoming a successful woman,” said Peterson. “We want to encourage girls to follow their dreams and that they can do anything.”

Not only do Stefanyshyn-Piper's outreach efforts aim to inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers, they also help to show how their dreams can be accomplished while serving their country.

“I think beforehand the girls had no idea really what the training or the education was to become either a Navy diver or astronaut,” said Peterson. “Seeing and speaking about it make it much more attainable. All of them said I want to be an astronaut or I wanted to be in the navy. All of them were excited about the possibilities of becoming a navy astronaut or navy diver.”



For more information about Southwest Regional Maintenance Center, please visit <http://www.swrmc.navy.mil/>