

Area Girls to Build Mobile Apps at SWOSU Tech Trek

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University School of Business and Technology Instructor Lisa Friesen (left) and Bar-S Computer Scientist Intern Rachel Hurt (right) will pilot the MIT App Inventor course at SWOSU during the Tech Trek Math and Science Camp planned July 13-19 on the Weatherford campus. The course is supported by a Verizon grant.

A pilot program offered in Oklahoma and in just two other places in the nation will give middle school girls the opportunity to build a mobile app through a course designed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

As part of the [Tech Trek](#) Math and Science Camps, the App Inventor curriculum will be offered in July at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford; the University of California, Santa Barbara; and the University of Alabama, Huntsville. The curriculum is made possible, thanks to an \$84,000 grant from Verizon.

Each summer, members of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) host weeklong camps for middle school girls. The three camps that will pilot the App Inventor course were announced at the White House Science Fair in May. This year's fair focused on women and girls as part of President Barack Obama's [ongoing commitment](#) to get underrepresented groups excited about Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

The campers, who will enter eighth grade this fall, will learn app design, basic programming skills and the App Inventor tool. Through the Verizon grant, MIT trained Tech Trek instructors during the month of June to teach the course. In addition, they will provide assistance during the camps to ensure flawless implementation. To reduce costs, one set of tablets will be shared among the camps. SWOSU School of Business and Technology Instructor Lisa Friesen and Bar-S Computer Scientist Intern Rachel Hurt will lead Tech Trek at SWOSU campers through the computer science core curriculum.

"We are excited to be part of such a fascinating camp that can support girls in becoming our future doctors, scientists, mathematicians, engineers, computer scientists, and anything else they set their mind towards," Hurt said. "We are happy to offer encouragement and give them a glimpse of what their future may hold."

Tech Trek got its start 15 years ago when AAUW of California member Marie Wolbach applied for an AAUW [Community Action Grant](#) to open a science camp for girls on the Stanford University campus. The program grew to multiple sites in California, and since 2012, AAUW expanded the program's reach to seven additional states. This is the second year for Tech Trek at SWOSU, thanks to the support of AAUW, Verizon and other generous [donors](#).

Tech Trek at SWOSU will take place July 13-19. For more information, see the camp website <http://techtrek-ok.aauw.net/> or contact Camp Director Lisa Appeddu at

580.774.3148 or lisa.appeddu@swosu.edu. The public is invited to see the campers in action on Thursday, July 17, but an RSVP is requested.