

Wild Side of Science
Alfred University Sigma Xi Chapter
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ABS Outreach Grant

Girl Scouts introduce girls of every age (K-12 grade) to the STEM disciplines: science, technology, engineering, and math. Girls are encouraged to explore all areas so to inspire them to embrace and celebrate scientific discovery. The Sigma Xi chapter of Alfred University created an educational outreach program (Wild Side of Science) that will allow all Girl Scouts to earn science-related badges. Not only is this program aimed at the Girl Scouts, it introduces university students to science education. All of the science badges are organized and run by students. The Outreach Grant from the Animal Behavior Society will allow for the Wild Side of Science program to be offered for free for all Girl Scouts. It will cover the cost of supplies and the Girl Scout badge for about 200 girls. This will allow all girls to participate without worry if they could afford to.

Each age group explores a different science area. Daisies, girls in kindergarten and first grade, learn about plants and the how to protect the environment with students from the Biology Club, on their way to earning the new Eco Learner badge. Their experience includes a visit to SUNY Alfred State University's greenhouse and planting their own gardens to take home.

University students with the Chemistry Club help Brownies, girls in grades 2-3, earn the Home Scientist badge by performing experiments with density and electricity. The girls get to experiment with kitchen science by making ice cream and learning how science can make toys like slime.

Photo: Daisies learning about hydroponics



Photo: Scouts from Wayland, NY, Brownie Troop 60349, from left – Ava Canfield (second grade), Gwen Richardson (third grade) and Madelyn Zimbler (second grade) – show off some of the slime they made



Juniors, grades 4-5, explored air power while earning the Balloon Car Design Challenge badge with assistance from engineering students in Tau Beta Pi, Keramos, Phi Kappa Phi, the Alfred Biomaterials Society, and Omicron Delta Kappa. The girls learned about what it is like to be an engineering, how to go through the process of creating and building, testing their design, and finally making changes.



Photo: Alfred University students with Guiding Eyes for the Blind trainee dog, XXXX

Cadettes, grades 6-8, complete the Animal Helpers badge with students from the PreVet Club and Guiding Eyes for the Blind. Animals have always provided humans with food, clothing, and transportation, but today they're also trained to help people with disabilities, find people who are lost, and even discover tumors. The girls learned about the connection between humans and animals. They discover how animals keep people safe and help people emotionally by being therapy dogs. The girls have several opportunities to interact with working dogs. Jam, a corgi, sits with people while they read and provides emotional support. Neymar, a dog training in the Guiding Eyes for the Blind program, is learning basic skills, obedience, and social competences. Blue, the official therapy dog of the Alfred University Psychology and Counseling program, helps people with social, emotional, cognitive, and physical challenges. At the end, the girls make dog toys to donate to the Guiding Eyes for the Blind.

In Girl Scouts, building friendships and community networks is important. Seniors, grades 9-10, lead a series of fun, inventive, and challenging games with students from the Biology Club. Using their vision, of what is surprising, fantastic, team-building, and fun, to invent some unforgettable activities. Making games is about pushing boundaries of creativity and possibility.