

Girls Get IT and Sherpani Partners team up to Tell IT All at Milton High School

On November 6, 2008 Girls Get IT and Sherpani Partners hosted the inaugural Tell IT All workshop at Milton High School. Nine girls from the robotics programs at Milton, Kell and Sequoia High Schools attended. The event featured a panel discussion and Q&A with an impressive group of women in emerging technology roles. The panel was made up of Abigail Smith, What's Up Interactive, Amy Rydarowski, Playmotion! and Kim Hunter, Simmons Bedding Company. Each panelist told how her professional and educational path led her to her current position.

Each woman had a different story. All were great examples of how one's career path changes over time and the importance of being ready for the opportunities. For example, Hunter started out as an elementary school teacher. She volunteered to lead an online grade book initiative at her school which unexpectedly led to an IT management role with the school and a new career. Today, she leads a team of user services technicians for Simmons. Smith was an undecided major for three years in college, taking a variety of courses to see what interested her, finally deciding on a major in newspapers. Upon graduation she landed a job at Coxnet as an online news producer. She later took a job at What's Up Interactive where after a variety of jobs, she is currently directing client services in interactive multi-media marketing. Rydarowski started out with an interest in film and visual storytelling. By exploring other interests, including digital video, art and working with sensors and programming, she built a unique skill set that helped her land a position as an experience designer at Playmotion! where in just her first six months she's worked on projects with teams at Disney to engage park guests while they wait in line for a ride.

"I am so excited. I always thought I wanted to be a veterinarian, but when listening to Abigail Smith, I kept thinking--oh that sounds great for me," said Erin McPherson, student attendee.

After the panel session concluded, the girls went to a computer lab to complete the Strong Interest Inventory. During a follow-up session scheduled for November 27th, Sherpani will share the results and help each girl identify academic courses, college majors and their top 10 career fields that best fit her interests. It is a great starting point in learning about exploring.

"One of the most important outcomes of this workshop is to expand the girls' horizons," said Sandra Schumann, Sherpani Partners. "We are generally interested in only what we have been exposed to--by family, friends, school and the media. Through this workshop, the girls heard about and saw some new possibilities."

A special thanks goes to Suzy Crowe, the teacher from Milton High School who was kind enough to host the event. GGIT and Sherpani Partners hope to hold more of these workshops throughout the year and build on the success and momentum of this first event.

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