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URI to hold chemistry camp for middle school girls

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BY LINDA BORG

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SOUTH KINGSTOWN, R.I. – A week-long chemistry camp for up to 40 middle school girls will be held at the University of Rhode Island's Kingston campus from April 21 through 25 during public school vacation.

The camp is the brainchild of URI assistant chemistry professor Mindy Levine, who is concerned about research that shows girls start losing interest in science during middle school or earlier. The result, she says, is a dearth of women working in science, technology, engineering, and math.

Levine wants to change that trend. She's packed the camp with hands-on experiments using real-world objects, scientists in a variety of interesting careers as guest speakers, and a field trip to Mystic Aquarium to dissect squid.

"I want these girls to come out of this camp thinking that science is cool and that women can become scientists," said Levine.

Each day of the camp features fun activities with a scientific focus, including lipstick chromatography, the chemistry of bubbles, oil spill clean-up, corn starch relays, and making gak and oobleck. The camp concludes with the science behind the Diet Coke and Mentos test.

Levine has an extensive network of female scientist colleagues who will meet and speak with the students. Female role models are critical when statistics show 75 percent of elementary school girls and 82 percent of boys report they like science. But by the time they reach high school, only 29 percent of girls report they'd enjoy being scientists compared to 52 percent of boys.

Those interested in registering or learning more about the camp should visit <http://www.chm.uri.edu/chemcamp/ccamp.html> or contact Levine at mlevine@chm.uri.edu <mailto:m_levine@mail.uri.edu> or call (401) 874-4243.



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