

Cyber camp shows girls how to protect themselves

ELIZABETH FRASER Fredericton Daily Gleaner

July 21, 2014

Share this article

Facebook

Twitter

Email



Hannah LeClair attended Cyber Girlz Camp at the University of New Brunswick.
Photo: Stephen MacGillivray/The Daily Gleaner

Do you feel like your teen is safe online? Regan LeClair is more confident her daughter Hannah is after sending her to a computer camp for girls last summer.

“She (Hannah) hummed and hawed about it. Then we promised she could have Facebook afterwards,” said LeClair. “Every day she came home from camp happy and engaged.”

In the summer of 2013, Hannah enrolled in the Cyber Girlz Camp at the University of New Brunswick.

The day camp aims to attract more girls into the world of technology and teach them how to protect themselves online.

The camp is targeted for girls in Grades 6 to 9.

LeClair says it gave her daughter a chance to learn about computer science and social media. But it also taught Hannah how to stay away from cyberbullying and what she should and should not post online.

“She (Hannah) enjoyed it (Cyber Girlz Camp) and it gave her a lot of confidence to be online and it gave me and her dad that reassurance that she was protected,” said LeClair.

“With social media and her being in middle school, we wanted her to know how to protect herself.”

This year, Hannah spent a lot of time on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.

On Facebook, she likes to message people on her contacts list and post photos of her and her friends.

“I like to talk to my family and friends,” said the 12-year-old. “It makes me happy and it’s a lot of fun.”

The pre-teen also learned skills like coding, how the Internet works, and Internet security such as how to recognize a safe and unsafe password.

On the Cyber Girlz blog on the UNB website, a 2012 report from the Information and Communications Technology Council on gender representation in the Canadian labour force shows that only 24 per cent of women are involved in information and communications technology.

In the past, Natalia Stakhanova, NB Innovation Research Chair in Cyber Security and organizer of Cyber Girlz, says she didn’t see many girls at computer camps and wanted to change that.

She also hopes the all-girls camp will inspire the young females to pursue a career in the field of computer science.

“There’s a general decline of girls involved in STEM Science (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), and it starts in middle school. Computer Science is a male-dominated field,” she said.

“We want to show girls it’s fun and very interesting and not just for boys.”

The camp, which started last year also offers games that show girls how to keep private information on the Internet, online fingerprinting, and how communication works on the Internet.

The camp also brings in computer scientists from the field to talk about the industry.

This year, the camp will be offered at UNB from Aug. 18 to 22 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day.

“The field will benefit from girls’ input because they put different insight into the problem and the solution. They (girls) have different perspectives from what boys can offer,” she said. “This is what the field is missing, this other side, the alternative perspective.”

Stakhanova says she hopes to expand the camp to girls of different age groups throughout the summer.

“This problem is not going to go away, I hope we can help as many girls as possible,” she said. “We have a lot of dads saying they want their girls to sign up. That’s a positive sign many girls like it.”

Share this article

Facebook

Twitter

Email



Your Disqus account has been created! Learn more about using Disqus on your favorite communities.

Get Started

Dismiss ✕

0 Comments

Telegraph Journal

Natalia Stakhanova ▾

Sort by Best ▾

Share ↗ Favorite ★



Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

ALSO ON TELEGRAPH JOURNAL

WHAT'S THIS?

Times & Transcript

3 comments • 2 days ago

LEAH BENOIT — This is a real uplifting news story especially considering our economy. Hope you have a great future.

The Daily Gleaner

1 comment • a day ago

MAUREEN PERRY — I think the bus service leaves a lot to be desired in this city. People don't use the service as it is so

Telegraph-Journal

1 comment • 2 days ago

JOE DOUCETTE — What the hell is wrong with people, 4 20 somethings beat up a homeless guy for what??? bragging

Greater Saint John

1 comment • 2 days ago

Leanne Dow-Campbell — Councillor Reardon.....this City has a lot more issues than parking lots.....children are

Subscribe

Add Disqus to your site