

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saugus Girl Scout Presents Web Project at Google Girl Scout coding workshop sparked interest in STEM for Kennedy Beck, age 16

LOS ANGELES, June 30, 2015 – It started with a Girl Scout workshop: Kennedy Beck, a 10th-grade Girl Scout from Saugus, was first introduced to computer science at a coding basics workshop hosted by [Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles](#) in November 2014. Months later—in June 2015—she found herself presenting at the Google headquarters.

With a piqued curiosity for coding, Kennedy applied to the [MAGIC \(More Active Girls in Computing\)](#) program, which she discovered through Girl Scouts. She was accepted and matched with a mentor, Hosanna Fuller, a computer science student at Barnard College in New York City. From February to June 2015, Kennedy and Hosanna met weekly through Google Hangouts. Hosanna gave Kennedy homework and guided her through the process of building a mobile website from scratch.

“I wanted to create an app for tourist attractions, similar to Yelp or Ask.com, but specific to teenagers,” Kennedy says. Kennedy presented her project at Google on June 22—the culmination of the MAGIC program.

“I was pretty nervous beforehand; I think I was the only person who had no long-term experience coding,” Kennedy says. “But when I was in front of the 50 or so people, I realized it was OK—I didn’t use note cards during my presentation, and it turned out great.”

Kennedy has practiced public speaking as a Destinations presenter for Girl Scouts, talking about travel opportunities in Girl Scouts. “It’s helped me a lot in building my confidence,” she says.

Now Kennedy is working toward her Girl Scout Gold Award, Girl Scouts’ highest honor, and plans to code an awareness website about distracted driving and drunk driving, fueled by a friend who was struck and killed by a driver last year. “It’s a rising problem, and we need to do something about it,” she says.

Girl Scouts has a strong history of developing pioneers in the fields of science and technology. Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles STE[A]M (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) programs encourage girls to discover how the world works around them and how they can explore careers in the sciences in order to lead positive change in the world. Nationally, Girl Scouts partners with Google for the [Made With Code](#) initiative, a website that includes fun, introductory coding activities.

Echoing this sentiment, MAGIC’s mission is to address the dropping number of girls entering the computing and high-tech arena. Women comprise only 28 percent of the technology workforce. “MAGIC is proud to take a leadership role in offering one-to-one STEM mentoring to middle and high school girls like Kennedy,” said Ira Pramanick, Founder and Board Chair of MAGIC and Software Engineer at Google.

“Before all of this, I knew nothing about coding. Now, I’m thinking about pursuing computer system analysis in college. The beauty with computers is there’s so much you can do.”

For more information about Girl Scouts, visit girlscoutsla.org. For more information about MAGIC, visit getmagic.org.

About Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles

Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles serves more than 40,000 girls in partnership with more than 20,000 volunteers throughout the diverse communities of Los Angeles County and parts of Kern, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties. The council engages girls through programs in Leadership, Business and Financial Literacy, Outdoor Adventure, STE[A]M (science, technology, engineering, art, math), and Healthy Living. To join, volunteer, reconnect, or support, visit www.girlscoutsla.org or call 213-213-0123.



Kennedy Beck (left), a 10th-grade Girl Scout from Saugus, was mentored by Hosanna Fuller (right) through the MAGIC program. After working together through Google Hangouts for months, they met in person at Google where Kennedy presented her coding project on June 22, 2015.



After presenting in front of more than 50 attendees, Kennedy Beck (right), a 10th-grade Girl Scout from Saugus, demonstrates the website she has built—similar to Ask.com or Yelp, only specific to teenagers—at the Google headquarters on June 22, 2015.