# National CyberWatch Center Hosts Ohio Cool Careers in Cybersecurity for Girls Workshop

*Event for middle school students featured hands-on activities and interactions with female cybersecurity professionals*

Steubenville, OH (PRWEB) February 02, 2015 -- The National CyberWatch Center K-12 Division, led by Educational Technology Policy, Research and Outreach (ETPRO), in partnership with the Steubenville City Schools, continued its national tour by welcoming one hundred public middle school girls to the Cool Careers in Cybersecurity for Girls™ Workshop on January 29, 2015.

Created to assist young women in learning the skills necessary to have a career in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), the program creates a digital crime scenario to allow students to take a hands-on approach to solving instances of cybercrime. Students are also able to learn more about careers in cybersecurity from women employed in the field and take part in activities like cryptography, assembling a computer, cell phone forensics, learning about the education required and the salary ranges for careers in cybersecurity and other STEM fields.

"While women make up 50 percent of the workforce, females account for only a quarter of all STEM related personnel and only 10 percent of the cybersecurity workforce," said Dr. Davina Pruitt-Mentle, founder of C34G and Director of the National CyberWatch Center K-12 Division. "Partnering with non-profits including schools, libraries, and higher education institutions, Cool Careers in Cybersecurity is addressing the gender gap directly by giving girls a glimpse at what careers in cyber are all about."

While women in these careers have made progress over the last few decades, the number of women in these industries significantly lags behind males. Research has shown that up until grade three, girls and boys show an equal amount of interest in STEM areas of study, but that number drastically decreases as these young women move through middle and high school. Another issue is that women and minorities often have limited exposure to computers in youth, especially if they come from lower-income families. These seminars provide targeted programs to educate women on these job opportunities, and assist in recruiting and retaining young talent for science and technology fields.

"We were so excited to host the event. The girls loved the program! We even had some high school students requesting to attend as well. We don't have many of these type of opportunities in our area so we were thrilled to partner with NCC," said Dr. Shana D'Aurora, Steubenville City Schools STEM Academy Director. "We are thrilled to continue partnering efforts with NCC to offer CyberSTEM summer camps and teacher professional development. We think this will be a great opportunity for our students."

Cool Careers for Girls in Technology workshops began in 2001, and the Cool Careers in Cybersecurity for Girls Workshops began in 2005. Through funding from the National Science Foundation, the event has been held annually, impacting over 7500 middle school girls to date. More details on Cool Careers in Cybersecurity for Girls can be found at: http://www.edtechpolicy.org/cyberk12/ and http://www.coolcareersforgirls.org/

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