

Delaware Announces Innovative Cybersecurity Partnership for Young Women

Girls Go CyberStart offers online cybersecurity training, prizes for Delaware young women in grades 9-12

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney and Delaware’s Chief Information Officer (CIO) James Collins announced on Monday an innovative cybersecurity training partnership between the SANS Institute and the State of Delaware that provides young women in high school interested in a cybersecurity career the opportunity to discover their aptitude and learn basic cybersecurity skills through a no-cost online game of discovery called [Girls Go CyberStart](#).

“The importance of cybersecurity cannot be understated and I encourage young women in Delaware high schools to take advantage of this opportunity to explore career options in this vital field,” said **Governor Carney**. “Delaware needs a pipeline of talent and a strong workforce to remain competitive in the innovation economy. We are excited to continue our partnership with the SANS Institute.”

Last summer, Delaware was one of seven states to [partner](#) with the SANS Institute to pilot CyberStart, a program designed to inspire the next generation of cybersecurity professionals while identifying talented youth. The program enabled 3,300 students in seven states to discover and demonstrate their aptitude for cybersecurity. However, only five percent of the students who participated in CyberStart’s first round were young women. In Delaware, 359 students enrolled in the practice round.

Delaware partnered with the SANS Institute on this initiative to give more talented young women in Delaware high schools an opportunity to explore a career in cybersecurity. The Delaware Department of Technology and Information is partnering with the Department of Education and a variety of organizations, including the Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay, to support and encourage as many young women as possible in high school today to register to participate in this exceptional opportunity.

“We applaud the SANS Institute for recognizing the importance and value of a diversified workforce and for working to provide creative opportunities for young women to learn more about careers in cybersecurity,” said **CIO James Collins**. “Girls Go CyberStart is a fun way for young women to test their skills to find out if they a talent or interest in becoming a cybersecurity professional at no cost. This is a fantastic opportunity and we encourage all our high school-age, young women to take advantage of it!”

Chief Executive Officer of Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay Anne T. Hogan noted, “Girls are natural-born scientists, which is why we introduce Girl Scouts of every age to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) to help them see how they can improve the world. At Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay, we have been on the forefront of STEM programming for young woman, and are very excited to bring Girls Go CyberStart Challenge to our high school-age Girl Scouts. This program will allow girls to learn by doing, develop important problem solving and leadership skills, and take the lead on their futures.”

Registration will begin on January 29, 2018 and end on February 16, 2018. The first 10,000 young women in high school who have registered by the deadline can play the game online from February 20 through February 25. More details about the program can be found at GirlsGoCyberStart.com.

Participating students do not need prior cybersecurity knowledge or programming experience. All that is required is a computer and an internet connection. Young women in high school in Delaware who excel in the Girls Go CyberStart game will have the opportunity to win computers and other prizes as well as a trip, with a parent, to the 2018 Women in CyberSecurity Conference.

Each player starts as a “cyber protection agent” responsible for protecting an important operational base. The student chooses and solves challenges, earning points along the way. A cyber protection agent field manual provides answers to questions that may arise, and hints are available to help when players get stuck. When the player has solved a sufficient number of challenges at one level, a new level opens up and new challenges appear – for a total of 10 levels.

Young women in Delaware high schools will participate alongside students from Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming and American Samoa.

When asked why SANS is partnering with Delaware in Girls Go CyberStart program, **SANS Director of Research Alan Paller** said, “Because the nation desperately needs more highly-skilled cyber professionals, and we have evidence that CyberStart improves the quality and preparation of people entering the cybersecurity field. Further, the two best cyber intrusion analysts I have ever met were named Vicki and Judy, but women are woefully underrepresented in the technical side of cybersecurity. By opening CyberStart to thousands of high school girls we hope to help the nation identify the next generation of talented people who will excel in this critical field.”

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For more information about cybersecurity and Girls Go CyberStart, visit digiknow.dti.delaware.gov or GirlsGoCyberStart.com.

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[Governor Carney Launches “NSA Day of Cyber” School Challenge at Secure Delaware 2017](#)

[Governor Carney Signs Legislation Extending Cybersecurity Protections for Delawareans](#)

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