

# DELAWARE TEAMS EARN TOP HONORS IN GIRLS GO CYBERSTART

*Teams from Padua Academy, Charter School of Wilmington and MOT Charter School receive top scores*

**DOVER, Del.** – Governor John Carney and Chief Information Officer (CIO) James Collins congratulate Delaware's winners of the Girls Go CyberStart program sponsored by the SANS Institute. From February 10 through May 21, more than 15,600 young high school women representing nearly all U.S. states and territories competed in an online series of challenges that allow students to solve cybersecurity-related puzzles and explore exciting, relevant topics, such as cryptography and digital forensics. Delaware's top-scoring teams were Cyber Pandas from Padua Academy (Miranda Evans, Molly Shapiro, Annamarie Warnke and Kelsey Mulrooney), Charter School of Wilmington Club from the Charter School of Wilmington (Cathy Chian, Udeerna Tippabhatla, Isabel Snyder and Maya Bordrick), and Mustang Pride from MOT Charter School (Rachel Pfeifer, Jocelyn Bartsch, Divita Taduvayi, Shriya Bagdi). These teams ranked ninth, sixty-third and one hundred and eighty-second nationally. Prizes, provided by the SANS Institute, include:

- 1st prize = \$100 per team member and \$100 for their school
- 2nd prize = \$75 per team member and \$100 for their school
- 3rd prize = \$50 per team member and \$100 for their school

Delaware took part in Girls Go CyberStart for the third year in a row and had 187 girls participate. Twenty-two went on to compete nationally, with four young women from the Cyber Pandas team ranking in the top ten.

“It’s great that the SANS Institute adapted and extended the Girls Go CyberStart competition this year to accommodate the needs of our students during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said **Governor John Carney**. “Congratulations to Delaware’s winning teams and to all the students that participated in this challenge. We look forward to seeing you pursue these cybersecurity talents as we prepare the workforce of tomorrow.”

“Providing opportunities like Girls Go CyberStart, planting seeds early and inspiring our students are absolutely essential to helping them discover and pursue a passion for cybersecurity,” said **Chief Information Officer James Collins**. “We are so proud of all the students that stepped up to take part in this competition and we encourage each and every one to continue to develop those skills as the importance of cybersecurity will only continue to grow.”

“When I first participated in Girls Go CyberStart as a Freshman, I didn’t know anything about cybersecurity,” said **Cyber Pandas team member Annamarie Warnke**. “CyberStart gave me a strong foundation, not only in basic cybersecurity and computer science topics such as cryptography and web exploitation, but also in life skills such as problem solving and teamwork. Every year, I get to build on my abilities when I compete in CyberStart; there are challenges for every skill level, and it’s still fun even after I’ve competed for three years. Girls Go CyberStart truly sparked my interest in cybersecurity and gave me the tools I needed to maintain that interest throughout high school.”

“CyberStart gave me the opportunity to explore my interest in cybersecurity,” explained **Cyber Pandas teammate Molly Shapiro**. “When I started in my freshman year, I had no clue what I was doing. Now, I’m able to hold my own in a national competition. It presents cybersecurity problems in an interesting and engaging way and allows me to develop my skills while working with my friends on an entertaining competition. ”

For more information about cybersecurity and/or GirlsGoCyberStart, please visit <https://digiknow.delaware.gov> or [www.GirlsGoCyberStart.com](http://www.GirlsGoCyberStart.com).

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### **About the Delaware Department of Technology and Information**

The Department of Technology and Information (DTI) is the state's central IT organization, chartered to deliver core services to other state organizations and exercise governance over the technology direction and investments of the state. DTI provides enterprise services that enable other organizations to effectively fulfill their missions.

[www.dti.delaware.gov](http://www.dti.delaware.gov)

### **About SANS Institute**

The SANS Institute was established in 1989 as a cooperative research and education organization. SANS provides cyber security training and certification to professionals at governments and commercial institutions world-wide. Renowned SANS instructors teach over 50 different courses at more than 200 live [cyber security training](#) events as well as online. At the heart of SANS are the many security practitioners, representing varied global organizations from corporations to universities, working together to help the entire information security community.

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