NEWS RELEASE

# Inspiring Future Female Engineers

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Recently at CLT, American team members hosted 80 girls ages 6-12 who were participating in an all-female science, technology, engineering and math education (STEM) summer camp called Project Scientist Academy. For six weeks, the students are immersed in STEM, learning from a tailored curriculum facilitated by credentialed educators as well as through hands-on experiments, field trips and daily interactions with female STEM role models in a variety of professional fields.

American created an expedition for the girls that focused on the aviation industry. The junior aviators were given a 3.5 hour behind-the-scenes tour of American's facilities, including the newly renovated Hub Control Center, the Flight Service department, the 200,000-square-foot training center with flight simulators and the Base Maintenance hangar.

All of the tours were led by female leaders who have careers that use their background in STEM education. Engineers Beth Lloyd, Diana Curlee, Casey Gillespie, Saritha Ramkumar, Jordan Drischler and Huda Fadhel joined the students on the tours as mentors.

"It's important for me to show the girls that 'we can do it,' and if you like science and feel a passion for science, then there are no limits," said Diana Curlee, an engineer for the A330/A350 Fleet Engineering group.

At the end of the tours, the students were given the opportunity to have a candid Q&A with our female engineering team to learn more about them and that they do. One inquisitive 8-year-old took out her notebook and pen, shyly

rose her hand and asked, “who, or what, inspired you to become an engineer?”

Although some of the women credited their love for math and science in school or close family members for their inspiration and encouragement, Beth, a mechanical engineer for the A319/A320/A321 fleet, said she wanted to be an engineer because she wanted to solve technical problems.

“I love that American pays me to think and figure things out,” said Beth.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, jobs in science, technology, engineering and math will grow 8.9 percent by 2024 and are always in high demand. Beth, a mechanical engineer in Fleet Engineering, believes that’s why summer programs like Project Scientist are vital.

“Girls who see adult women in technical roles are less likely to be intimidated by technical coursework, and therefore more likely to complete degrees in math, engineering and science,” said Beth. “I didn’t know any women engineers until I went to college, so it’s important to me to show young girls what it looks like to be a woman working as an engineer.”

Project Scientist notes that while 78 percent of school-aged girls have an interest in STEM, women only make up 25 percent of the STEM workforce. The Project Scientist Academy brings together a community of like-minded girls that enjoy exploring through the sciences and being exposed to various corporations that offer careers centered on STEM, like American.

“It’s always fun when you can show kids what the airline is all about,“ said Jordan Drischler, an engineer in the Airbus Reliability department. “I think it’s important that we continue to foster the curiosity of these young girls and encourage future generations that these careers are open to them if they put their mind to it.”