

## ASU PROFESSORS CREATE GIRL SCOUT BADGE TO ENCOURAGE GIRLS TO PURSUE MATHEMATICS



*Local Girl Scouts learn about the opportunity to earn a new badge from three ASU professors who are encouraging them to pursue their love of math. Photo submitted*

Appalachian State University professors Sarah Greenwald, Amber Mellon, and Jill Thomley are passionate about mathematics, and have found a way to encourage young girls to pursue their love of math.

"Girl Scouts of America has found that girls are interested in mathematics but they don't have role models to follow, and

they need them," says Sarah.

This led the trio to create a Girl Scout badge that encourages girls to learn about mathematics and the women who practice in the field. "There was no badge related directly to mathematics until we made one," Sarah says.

There are five steps to earning any Girl Scout badge; for the Mathematics badge those five steps are:

- Learn about a woman who was not afraid to be a first in the field of mathematics.
- Learn about the Association for Women in Mathematics (AWM).
- Reflect on experiences in mathematics.
- Learn about careers in mathematics.
- Share what you know.

In partnership with High Country Girl Scouts, the Department of Mathematical Sciences at ASU and the Association of Women of Mathematics, Sarah, Amber and Jill hosted an event which allowed local

Girl Scouts to learn about mathematics and earn the badge. Girls from grades six-nine participated in the event. Sarah says that she, Amber and Jill plan to incorporate activities for younger girls in future events.

"The feedback we received at the event was positive," she added. "I spoke with one girl in particular, whose mother mentioned to us that there really aren't any projects for girls who are interested in math. They were so happy to see that we were working to meet that need."

Overall, the women are encouraged by the positive feedback received regarding the badge and its activities. "It's so important to give girls positive experiences with math, and the middle grades and high school are where we lose a lot of girls who are interested in the topic," Sara says. "If this project can make a difference in even one girl's experiences with math, I think we've been successful."