ONWiE, CWSE-ON, & Girl Guides of Canada Partnership

The Ontario Network of Women in Engineering (ONWiE) collaborate to effect positive change in the participation rate of females as students and professionals in engineering. ONWiE is comprised of staff, faculty, and student representatives from each of the 15 faculties of engineering in Ontario. ONWiE holds two formal meetings per year, in which members can participate in person or via conference call.

The NSERC/RIM Chair for Women in Science and Engineering – Ontario (CWSE-ON) works to increase the participation of women of all ages in science and engineering. Partnerships, such as the one with ONWiE, play a key role in the CWSE-ON program.

One success of the partnership with ONWiE is Go ENG Girl/GÉNiales, les filles:

- a province wide, one-day event to introduce and engage young girls and their parents in engineering
- offered for 6 consecutive years
- 2010 event was held at 11 locations, engaged more than 1000 participants

CWSE-ON provides:
- central fundraising
- resources for materials

Each event location:
- receives support from their Dean for local expenses
- tailors the workshop activities to highlight aspects of their program

What makes the ONWiE–CWSE-ON partnership a success:
- commitment to a common goal
- significant amount of volunteer effort
- central coordination provided by CWSE-ON

Engineering Badge Day is an initiative which leverages on the success of Go ENG Girl/GÉNiales, les filles. ONWiE members are offering Girl Guides across Ontario the opportunity to earn their Engineering badge at their local campus during National Engineering Month.

ONWiE members:
- design an event which meets the Girl Guides requirements for the Engineering Badge
- share material and resources for the activities and programs
- tailor their workshop activities to highlight the unique aspects of their engineering program

CWSE-ON staff:
- work with Girl Guides of Canada, Ontario Council to connect ONWiE members with local Guide units
- distribute resource materials and information, largely through the ONWiE website
- coordinate with National Engineering Month organizers

ONWiE and CWSE-ON use participant evaluation surveys measure the success of outreach events. Here’s what some Guelph area Guides had to say after completing their Engineering Badge with CWSE-ON staff on campus, when asked what they had learned:

“What I learned is that you can do so much”

“That engineering has designing in it!”

“I learned that it is about building stuff and there are different kinds of engineering”