

## News Release

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## Campus hosts Merit Badge University; Faculty help scouts earn badges

**KOKOMO, Ind.** — Indiana University Kokomo faculty helped nearly 170 north central Indiana scouts earn badges, at the annual Merit Badge University.

Nine faculty members volunteered to lead badge workshops in areas including camping, geology, public health, bird studies, chemistry, and art.



Christian Chauret, dean of the School of Sciences and an active Boy Scout leader, said Merit Badge University gives scouts a chance to earn the merit badges needed to advance in rank, and to see what is available to them at IU Kokomo.

“As a public university, I think it is important for us to serve the youth in our region,” Chauret said. “It’s a good chance for our faculty to get involved in the community. It’s also a great way to show these scouts that we are here, and would be a good choice when they are ready for college.”

Each scout could earn two merit badges, one during the morning session, and one during the evening. There are 131 merit badges that can be earned by Boy Scouts, and 13 were available during the session.

The 150 Boy Scouts and 15 Girl Scouts completed work on approximately 300 badges during the session.

Lina Rifai, assistant professor of biology, said she would have enjoyed being a Girl Scout if she had grown up in the United States. She's glad to have an opportunity to participate in scouts now, helping them earn the bird studies merit badge.

"I love birding and bird watching, and my thesis for my Ph.D involved research with birds," she said. "Since I didn't have a chance to be a scout, I can at least get involved in such activities now by teaching Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts how amazing the world of birds is."

She taught bird anatomy, feathers, and behavior, as well as how to use binoculars and a field guide correctly to bird watch. She also talked about how to identify birds by sight and by their calls or songs.

Minda Douglas, assistant professor of fine arts, led the merit badge studies in visual art.

"The badge includes learning about art materials, experience working on a logo, discussion of careers in art, and learning to tell a story through images," she said. "I believe studying art is essential for learning, because it teaches problem solving and critical thinking. I am glad to have the opportunity to share this interest with the scouts."

*Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.*

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