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South Dakota State University Celebrates National Girls and Women in Sports Day with Sioux Valley Middle School

Wednesday Feb. 1 marked the 40th anniversary of Title IX and National Girls and Women in Sports Day. South Dakota State Athletics celebrated the day by inviting the Sioux Valley Middle School seventh and eighth grade girls to join their women's athletics teams for a day of fun and learning on the SDSU campus.

The girls met many of the SDSU women student-athletes and asked questions about individual sports and their experiences at SDSU. Women's basketball player Steph Paluch spoke to the young ladies about the importance of Title IX and being active throughout their lives.

"Title IX did so many positive things for women in both athletics and academics, without it, we wouldn't have many of the opportunities we have today," Paluch said. "It's also important that no matter the amount of interest level the girls have in organized sports that we encourage the idea of staying active for the overall health benefits."

The Sioux Valley Middle School girls stayed active throughout the day as they were brought down to the gym floor for activities such as the popular McDonald's Arches and Ameba Tag. Women's basketball player Jill Young also addressed them about the importance of doing well in school now to prepare them for collegiate success later. SDSU Admissions councilor Nicole McKibben also talked about how to prepare for college enrollment.

After the academic information, the Sioux Valley Middle School girls took a tour of the SDSU campus; visiting the wellness center, student union, Thorne Residence Hall and got a taste of college life by eating lunch at Larson Commons.

"The girls are fun to watch as they take in the overall experience," SDSU Assistant Volleyball Coach Kristen Belzung said. "There are always lots of questions and comments, especially when they see the residence hall rooms. Our athletes really enjoy spending time with the girls, too, and they know how important it is for girls to have positive role models and they take that role seriously."

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