

MONROVIA

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monrovia Unified Senior to Pursue Passion for Game Design at USC

MONROVIA – Monrovia High School senior Charlie Heatherly, who has helped build the school’s prestigious game development team Forge Interactive, will take his talents to the next level as he attends USC – home to the top-rated game design program in the country.

“It is overwhelming to me in the best possible way. I am excited and ready to learn,” Heatherly said. “This is the culmination of hundreds of hours of hard work that I have put in, as well as that of my entire games team. I want to thank my father, who taught me how to be a team leader, and my teacher Mr. Carlson, who guided me through the development of my first game during my junior year.”

Heatherly honed his game designing skills through Forge Interactive, Monrovia High’s student-led indie game development team. With team members that specialize in all aspects of the game design process – from art and animation to writing and testing – Forge Interactive’s goal is to graduate students who have team-building experience and are knowledgeable about the game industry.

“Charlie’s leadership skills are a big reason that Forge Interactive has been so successful,” Monrovia High CTE teacher Anthony Carlson said. “Forge is a practical approach to tech education that focuses on teamwork, helping students develop project management skills and holding daily meetings to move their project forward. We want students to graduate with an accurate idea of what it’s like to work in the industry, with experience and skills under their belt.”

Heatherly joined Forge Interactive as a junior, where he developed his first game, Gossip Inc., putting the lessons taught by his father, a game designer and media executive, to the test.

Heatherly became a game director at Forge, bringing a team together to design Forge’s first digital game, Red Dungeon. Heatherly also co-hosts the Socratic Cinema podcast and is a member of the Mathletes Club.

Monrovia High School senior and Forge Interactive team member Matthew Thoemmes will join Heatherly as a game design major at an elite university, attending UC Santa Cruz next year.

“Being invited to the Forge has been one of my best high school experiences,” Thoemmes said. “When I came to class I knew almost nothing at all about programming. I was slowly able to learn thanks to the guidance of the team, and I was accepted into UC Santa Cruz to study game design and programming. I am extremely excited to be attending UC Santa Cruz.”

MORE

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Our students will be ethical, compassionate individuals who:

- graduate from high school prepared for college and career,
- contribute and adapt to an ever-changing world by being resourceful and responsible citizens, and
- embrace diversity.

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To learn more about Monrovia High School's Digital Studies Academy, which focuses on game design, software engineering and digital, video and graphic design, visit the school's [website](#).

"We are thrilled to see our game design students advance to programs that will allow them to expand on the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit that has made Monrovia Unified and Forge Interactive leaders in the field of video game development," Monrovia Board President Maritza Travanti said. "Thank you to Anthony Carlson for developing this program and best of luck to Charlie and Matthew. We can't wait to see what the future brings them."

PHOTO CAPTION

05.04.21_MUSD_CHARLIE1: Monrovia High School senior Charlie Heatherly has been accepted into USC, which offers the top-rated game design program in the country.

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