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San Gabriel Unified Parents Explore Computer Science, Robotics during Hour of Code Workshop

SAN GABRIEL, CA – Washington Elementary parents put newly learned coding skills to work as they programmed robots to move and make animal sounds during the school's Hour of Code Parent Education Night, which highlighted the importance of computer science education.

Washington Principal Ross Perry and Jackie Avakian, San Gabriel Unified's educational technology coordinator, presented the hour-long workshop on Dec. 11 to show families what students are learning during Hour of Code, a weeklong series of introductory computer science and programming lessons held Dec. 11-15.

"It is always important for parents to know what their students are learning and through this workshop we can teach them how to support computer science and coding at home," Perry said.

Parents received hands-on instruction in programming the school's newly purchased Wonder Workshop's Dash and Dot robots, which are equipped to respond to voice and clapping commands, navigate objects and recognize other robots.

Mayra Whitehead said the workshop opened her eyes to the fun of coding and how beneficial it is for students who struggle with traditional subjects.

"I loved learning about basic coding and how to program the robot to complete commands," said Whitehead, parent of a first-grader at Washington. "This type of instruction will teach my son critical thinking and how to follow directions. Coding is something I can do at home with him and he'll learn that education can be fun."

Hour of Code is an international movement that aims to immerse students in coding projects and bring awareness to potential STEM-related hobbies and careers. During the workshop, Perry and Avakian discussed the high demand for workers in computer science jobs and the need for more women and people of color in the industry.

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Avakian also highlighted coding and computer science opportunities that are available at Jefferson Middle School, including the robotics team and STEM electives.

"San Gabriel Unified School District is committed to providing students with technology-based instruction that prepares them for academic and professional success in STEM fields," SGUSD Superintendent Dr. John Pappalardo said. "We are thrilled to share with our parents what their students are learning and to demonstrate the importance of coding and robotics in everyday life."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

121517_SANGAB_HOURCODE1: Twenty Washington Elementary parents put newly learned coding skills to work as they program robots to move and make animal sounds during the school's Hour of Code Parent Education Night on Dec. 11, which highlighted the importance of computer science education.

121517_SANGAB_ HOURCODE2: Washington Elementary parents receive hands-on instruction in programming the school's newly purchased Wonder Workshop's Dash and Dot robots. Washington Principal Ross Perry presented the hour-long workshop to show families what students are learning during Hour of Code, a weeklong series of introductory computer science and programming lessons held Dec. 11-15.

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