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NEWS RELEASE

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South Hills High Recognized for Championing Female Representation in Computer Science

COVINA, CA – South Hills High School has been nationally recognized for its commitment to closing the gender gap in computer science, earning the AP® Computer Science Female Diversity Award by the College Board’s AP Program, underscoring Covina-Valley Unified’s commitment to providing equitable opportunities that empower all students to excel in high-demand fields.

South Hills secured the award for its efforts in expanding young women’s access to both the AP Computer Science A (CSA) and AP Computer Science Principles (CSP) classes. It was one of only 237 schools nationwide to receive this recognition for AP CSA, reflecting the school’s success in increasing female representation in computer science during the 2023-24 school year.

The AP® Computer Science Female Diversity Award is given to schools that have either reached 50% or higher female participation in AP Computer Science exams or have female representation that meets or exceeds the school’s overall female population.

“At South Hills High, we are committed to providing opportunities for all students to excel in STEM fields,” Principal Terry Abernathy said. “This is a testament to our dedication to breaking barriers and ensuring that female students have access to high-quality computer science education.”

The South Hills High AP CSA and CSP classes are partnered with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to provide students with access to industry-aligned curriculum and scholarship opportunities for underrepresented youth. Through this initiative, a former female student received a \$40,000 AWS scholarship in the 2022-23 school year and is now studying computer science at the University of California, Berkeley.

Sophomore Denise Lee, a computer science student and the leader of the South Hills Robotics Club, represents the next generation of young women excelling in computer science.

“I believe more diversity in computer science is really important because technology is the future and it shapes so much of our world,” Lee said. “When I first started coding, there were only three girls, including me, in a class of over 30 students – seeing this motivated me to step up and get better at computer science.”

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Lee plans to pursue a career in either computer engineering or biomechanical engineering, which would allow her to use her coding skills to improve healthcare, innovate solutions for medical problems, and help others.

“This award reflects Covina-Valley Unified’s dedication to fostering inclusive learning environments where all students can develop the skills and confidence to pursue careers in computer science,” Superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Eminhizer said. “Expanding these opportunities shapes the next generation of innovators, and we are so proud of the outstanding efforts by our educators and students.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

CVUSD_COMPSCI1: South Hills High School has been honored with the AP® Computer Science Female Diversity Award by the College Board’s AP Program for its efforts in expanding young women’s access to both AP Computer Science A (CSA) and AP Computer Science Principles (CSP).

CVUSD_COMPSCI2: South Hills High School sophomore Denise Lee (middle) represents the next generation of young women excelling in computer science. South Hills High was recently recognized for its commitment to closing the gender gap in computer science.

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