



Press Release

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Lynwood Unified Introduces Kids to Computer Science Through Google CS-First Coding Clubs

Lynwood – Lynwood Unified is showing young students how their love for computers and online gaming can lead to possible careers in computer programming by offering coding clubs that teach students how to animate, engineer and problem-solve using computer science.

More than 300 third- through eighth-grade students from 12 elementary and middle schools took part in the District's first ever Google CS-First coding clubs this past school year and additional students received their coding experience during the summer as a part of the District's Summer Enrichment Program. The extended education has been mutually beneficial for both volunteers and students as more young learners are exposed to computer science while teachers polish their ability to convey the coding language.

"It's incredibly important that we increase access and exposure to computer science to not only our students but our teachers as well," Will Rogers sixth-grade teacher and coding club volunteer Stephanie Aguon said. "The education was magical for everyone involved. It was priceless to watch the faces of students when they realized they could create many of the things they love online."

Google's CS-First is a program that began in 2013 and now reaches more than 437,000 students and boasts more than 15,000 clubs and 12,000 volunteers across the country. Lesson themes include building interactive music videos, fashion-themed apps, interactive stories and video game design.

"Computer sciences are a critical aspect of our present and our future and we're committed to making sure Lynwood students and teachers have the tools they need to thrive in those fields," Lynwood Unified Superintendent Paul Gothold said. "What students learn in our coding clubs will build a strong foundation to help them stay ahead of the ever-changing technological curve."

Lynwood Unified teachers took the leap into computer science this March after they attended a CS-First event at Google's Venice offices. Teachers were trained on the coding curriculum and provided free content and resources that allowed them to launch clubs at their own schools. During the clubs, teacher volunteers work one-on-one with students to build their interactive projects.

Each school's club had around 30 students. Will Rogers Elementary students designed their own storytelling animations that featured a variety of characters, from singing birds to dogs eating Cheetos on the beach. Helen Keller Elementary students worked to create custom video games and presentations, culminating its spring class with an event on June 3, when parents were invited to attend and experience their child's work.

"Parents were able to see firsthand the magic that happened as their kids discovered what they could achieve through technology," Helen Keller sixth-grade teacher and coding club volunteer Sandra Naranjo said. "Our coding clubs really tap into a love that students have for technology and empower them to be a part of the production process."

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Coding clubs at Lynwood Unified's elementary schools will continue into next year, expanding to accommodate more students and more technical video projects.

"It is amazing to see such young students learning how to make video games and interactive projects using computer coding," LUSD Board President Alma-Delia Renteria said. "We are committed to presenting curriculum and programs that truly engage students and make them excited about coming to school every day. At the same time, we're providing learning opportunities that open the doors to careers in a massively growing field in which they can be successful."

PHOTO CAPTIONS

CODINGCLUB1: A Will Rogers student shows off her storytelling project completed during the school's computer coding club. Lynwood Unified students took part in the District's first ever Google CS-First coding clubs this past school year, while additional kids took part in the course over the summer.

CODINGCLUB2: Parents look on as their children share computer coding lessons at a June 3 event that culminated Helen Keller's coding club this past school year.

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