



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 23, 2013

Google Grant Launches New Era in Computer Science at Stratford

GOOSE CREEK, SC – Using funds from a \$17,560 grant from Google, Stratford High School is launching a new era in computer science education.

Part of this new era includes after-school and summer computer science camps directed by Stratford teacher Michael Eason and hosted by the Stratford High computer club, Cyber Knights. During July 15-25, approximately 50 rising 8th graders from Westview and College Park Middle Schools will have the chance to explore a variety of computer science topics. Each four-day camp highlights the curriculum of a new high school course designed for ninth graders—Exploring Computer Science. “We are excited about the camps and the new course,” said Stratford principal Heather Taylor, adding, “the camps are practically full and almost 100 students have requested the new course for this school year.”

According to Eason, “Computer science is THE science of the 21st Century. Our students who complete a four-course sequence in computer science will be well prepared to participate in today’s global, digital economy. And these camps are a great way to get students interested in computer science.” On the first day of camp, students created Web pages by writing their own HTML code using Notepad++ and used Trimble’s free SketchUp software to create a 3D model of a building. On the second day, they used MIT’s free AppInventor to create two apps for Android phones and tablets. The third day was spent learning about Object Oriented Programming structures such as classes and methods using Carnegie Mellon’s free Alice programming environment. On the final day, the students explored the site Code.org and faced several problem-solving scenarios that required them to develop creative coding solutions. The software used in the camps is freely available over the Internet, so students can continue to explore these topics at home.

Throughout the week campers updated their Web pages with screen-shots of their various activities and their Web pages were uploaded to the Internet so the campers can show their parents, grandparents, and friends what they created while attending the computer science camp. At the end of the week, campers posted their comments about the overall camp experience. Typical comments included: “This camp is the best camp I have ever been to. I really learned a lot here.” – Adam; “This camp was wonderful. I really enjoyed learning about computer science. I





would like to take [Mr. Eason's] class in high school." – Heaven; "This camp was the best choice I ever made!" – Hunter; "This camp was AMAZING. It taught me so many things about computers and computer programs I didn't know." – Kayla; and "This whole experience I had at camp was great...I will miss this camp and will be taking this class in high school." – Kyle.

In addition to the summer camps, Eason and the Cyber Knights hosted two weeks of after-school camps this past February and will host additional after-school camps this coming school year. At the conclusion of the camps, a detailed, camp-planning document will be compiled and shared with teachers across the state. The document will include information regarding camp planning and promotion, equipment and software needed, hour-by-hour camp activities, essentially everything a teacher needs to know to plan and run similar camps. While the camps at Stratford will accommodate approximately 100 students in 2013, Google and Eason are hopeful the camp-planning document will help other teachers hold similar camps that will impact many more students.

The grant is provided by the Google Data Centers Fund of Tides Foundation. Eason began working on the grant application in July 2012, submitted it in October, and received the award in November 2012.

For more information about this partnership, future camps, high school computer courses, or other computer science initiatives occurring at Stratford throughout the year, please contact:

Media Contact:

Teacher Michael Eason or Assistant Principal Dr. Monica Houston at 843-820-4000.

###

Picture - Students from College Park and Westview Middle Schools explore computer science during summer camp at Stratford High School.

