



Issue #7
July 27, 2016

Base Camp Coding Academy

Newsletter

Watermelon Carnival in Water Valley August 5th and 6th:

Base Camp students will be practicing their presentation, communication, and advocacy skills throughout the Watermelon Carnival. Each student (with a partner) will work a one hour shift during the carnival, answering questions about Base Camp for anyone who is curious. Please come see them, and enter the raffle for a Base Camp t-shirt!:

Friday, August 5th from 12 to 4

Saturday, August 6th from 10 to 1.

Classroom Progress:

We are in our eighth week at Base Camp, and classes continue to go very well. The students have passed through the foundational concepts of software and are now working in the conceptual space. This represents the transition from understanding how to have a computer think through a problem, to how to have that computer complete the task quickly and efficiently. (Optimization, object-oriented programming, etc.)

Project work has shifted from short exercises to more complex programs that require 2 to 3 days of focused effort. This scale of project is where communication, team-work, and debugging must be practiced at all times to succeed, and the class is wading into these challenges with the same energy they have brought to the rest of the curriculum.



We have enjoyed a parade of industry experts coming to the classroom to round out the education of each student with presentations and Q&A sessions. Some of the topics that have been covered include: professional conduct in a workplace, interviewing best practices, marketing, banking, personal finance, software development lifecycle management, and the value of friends and colleagues throughout a career that may span multiple companies. Thank you to Bethany Cooper, Tim Mask, John Oxford, Chris Floyd, Josh Mabus, and all the others who have made time to come share their expertise with our students.

This Wednesday we have a world-renown composer, Reiko Yamada, who will be speaking about being a minority

woman and excelling in a field dominated by folks who are generally neither of those things. (Reiko builds sound installations that use proximity sensors and all sorts of tech to make her soundscapes interactive. Her last installation was at the Met in New York.)

Field Trips:

Early this month the class was able to visit the offices of FNC Inc. in Oxford, and each student was able to shadow a software developer to experience “a day in the life”. Thank you to the team at FNC for coordinating this visit.

Base Camp received an invitation to the Tech JXN Innovation Summit & Hackathon. The event organizers waived the registration fee for all Base Camp students, and Fast Forward Mississippi sponsored the rental van that was needed to bring the class down to Jackson.

The students were privileged to hear from an excellent lineup of speakers. Our own Carla Lewis anchored a panel with Senator Brice Wiggins to speak about Mississippi's high tech industry, and C-Spire's dedication to investing in Mississippi's future with programs like Base Camp.



It was a pleasure to watch the Base Camp students in this context. They stood out as an attentive, interested, and professional group of young adults, and the event organizers welcomed them with open arms offering support and tips for the future. The importance of what this inaugural Base Camp class represents for Mississippi's future was not lost on the gathering of professionals and thought leaders.



As always, thank you to Sean and Nate for leading this initiative, and putting in twelve hour days to make valuable experiences like this happen for our students.



Access:

If you would like to keep up with the goings-on in the Base Camp classroom in between these monthly newsletters, Sean does a great job posting updates to our social media sites:

<https://www.facebook.com/basecampcodingacademy/>

<https://www.instagram.com/basecampcoding/>

Fundraising Activities:

Kagan and Glen continue meeting with business and philanthropic leaders across Mississippi to ensure Base Camp has the resources to fully serve our students. Any warm introductions you can offer are greatly appreciated.

TechHire Grant:

We received notification that Base Camp was not selected as one of the recipients of TechHire grant money. We are going through an analysis of our application to learn and improve for future opportunities.

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