



base camp
</CODING ACADEMY>

Issue #11
March 1, 2017

Base Camp Coding Academy Newsletter

We are shifting into high gear. That “We” is a larger group than you might at first think: yes our staff and students, but also: the teachers in our area schools who are helping identify future Base Camp students; the businesses that have helped turn this idea into a reality with their financial support are now providing mentors, job shadowing, internship, and employment opportunities; the private parties who have offered their financial support are helping recruit fellow philanthropists to strengthen our financial footing for the future, our education partners are pushing coding curriculums in Mississippi high schools to help plant the seeds of interest in this career path...

From day one Base Camp has been a wonderful collaborative enterprise, and each day that becomes more the case.

For example: <http://www.cspire.com/cms/wireless/base-camp/>

(It takes a slightly longer newsletter to cover all the exciting things that are going on. Thank you for reading.)

Classroom Progress:

As graduation approaches, the students are being challenged to balance their self-driven thesis projects, relationship building with their mentors, and weekly interviews with and site visits to potential employers. With roughly 2 months left at Base Camp, they are also managing strong feelings of trepidation and excitement about their upcoming transition from student to employee.



Sean put this visual inspiration up one evening to help track progress. Students move their pictures across the mountain range as they complete sections of their projects. If you have a moment, please take a look at their portfolios and feel free to send them your thoughts, questions, or words of support:

<https://basecampcodingacademy.org/student-portfolios>

As each student completes their thesis project and receives approval from their instructors, they will leave the classroom to spend a full 40 hour work week at a regional business to shadow a software engineer / developer.

This experience will afford them many opportunities. First, to self-identify any gaps in their skill sets, with time remaining before graduation to strengthen those areas. Second, to solidify their understanding of what their future employers will expect from them. Third, for the class as a whole to experience many work environments, and compare/contrast the various business cultures and industries that are open to them.

This could not happen without the participation of our regional business partners, who are donating this time to our students, and in some cases, also donating housing for those students who will be a significant distance from home. Thank you to CSpire, FNC/CoreLogic, Renasant Bank, MTrade, and NextGear.

Classroom Visitors:

Application and interview skills have been a primary focus in February. Bethany Cooper (BCCA Trustee) and Sage Nichols (BCCA Trustee) have worked one-on-one with each student to guide them in crafting an excellent resume.

John Marsalis (BCCA Trustee) spent a morning onsite conducting practice interviews. Since this practice round each student has interviewed with two major corporations, (FedEx and Renasant Bank,) and several more are scheduled for the coming weeks.

Zack Bishop, Jeff Murphy, and Jay Prewett spent a full day with us, interviewing each student for their summer internship program that is the first step towards a thriving career at Renasant Bank. Renasant Bank has two internship positions available, however they offered this full day to make sure every student benefited from the experience of interviewing with a financial institution, (or a tech company that happens to be in the financial space.)



FedEx came to our classroom to help prepare the class for a full-day visit to the FedEx facilities in Memphis. This site visit before the main event was very helpful in addressing pre-interview nerves, and providing a clear overview of the opportunities at FedEx for Base Camp graduates.



Field Trips:

The following day the class was at the FedEx facility in Memphis at 8:30, where our gracious hosts provided breakfast and wasted no time in getting the busy day rolling. The day was perfectly orchestrated, with students cycling seamlessly from individual interviews to group tours. The number of FedEx personnel who spent all or part of the day with the class, made time to sit and chat, eat lunch, explain their various roles, and get to know each student was beyond generous.



Several BCCA board members had the opportunity to meet with the FedEx Global Citizenship and Social Responsibility team during this visit.

Specific thanks to Bob Bortz, Mary Rashed, and Cooper Little, who made all this happen.

Class of 2018:

Our recruitment pool is expanding! In addition to Oxford, Lafayette, Water Valley, North Panola, and Pontotoc schools, who were so instrumental in forming the class of 2017, several additional schools have responded enthusiastically this year. Charleston High School has nominated two students (so far,) we are scheduled to speak in Calhoun City High School on March 7th, and we received a nomination from the Tate County School District.

Base Camp is currently receiving nominations for the class of 2018, (classes starting June 1, 2017.) If you know of a high school senior with a strong work ethic, a problem-solving mind, and limited education opportunities following high school, please reach out to their teachers and recommend a nomination to Base Camp.

We are prepared for an incoming class of 25.

The first step in nominating a student is filling out this short form online:

www.basecampcodingacademy.org/nominate

Last month we asked for help reaching three schools. In the past 30 days we have had great success with 2 out of those three. We would still love the opportunity to reach out to South Panola High School. If you have any ideas, please contact Kagan Coughlin: Kagan@basecampcodingacademy.org

Access:

If you would like to keep up with the goings-on in the Base Camp classroom in between these 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:

New Founding Sponsors Jan and Lawrence Farrington paid us a visit in late January, and took a moment to visit with the students. We are thrilled to have their support and their vote of confidence.

The owners of Lulu's Shoes and Accessories in Oxford, Kent and Corinne Jackson, donated a pair of "interview-ready" shoes to each of the young ladies of Base Camp.

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.

Graduation:

The class of 2017 will graduate in the first third of May, final date to be announced.

We would love for you to attend.

Founding Partners:

Northwest Mississippi Community College

Founding Sponsors:

Diane and Dickey Scruggs

The C Spire Foundation

Paige and Glen Evans

Ambassador John Palmer

Corelogic

generous/modest philanthropist #1

Renasant Bank

Jan and Lawrence Farrington

Community Sponsors:

Trustmark National Bank

Generous/modest philanthropist #2

BrainShark

AOL

New addition to the Base Camp family!

Nate Clark, Base Camp Technical Director, and his wife Megan welcomed their second son, Connor Clark, on February 20th. Connor and his mother are doing well, and Nate is working half days for the next couple of weeks.