

WeCode2

WeCode2 is a private school preparing to serve 95 students in grades K- High School. WeCode2 is a technology focused, co-ed (school serving male and female students) interested in helping students in developing a passion for technology

Vision

The vision of WeCode2 is to introduce minority students (grades K thru 12) to a STEAM based education. These programs will inspire a lifelong love for the exploration of technology.

Mission

By providing a safe, loving and challenging environment, we build a strong educational and moral foundation that prepares our children for future careers in technology. Our Mission is to expose our children to other options, not traditionally found in minority communities, and allow them at their own pace to develop a love and/or interest in a STEM based education. This is accomplished through hands on coding and robotics classes, outings, specialized workshops featuring CEOs of tech companies and trips to some of our nation's most notable technology schools.

Purpose

The goal of WeCode2 is to develop and stimulate the minds of our students, and to inspire a lifelong love for the exploration of technology.

School Philosophy

WeCode2 considers the school a ministry to the community. Its philosophy to the overall operation is based upon the Biblical command found in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." With Biblical principles undergirding the curriculum, WeCode2 is dedicated to the ideal of helping each student realize the full potential God has instilled in each of them. Because we value each child as a unique and special creation, we strive to provide a learning environment in which students can excel.

Executive Summary

WeCode2 is an educational outreach ministry of The Place of Grace, which offers summer enrichment STEAM camps and after school enrichment programs during the school year. We have a primary focus on technology, coding and robotics. Our vision is to introduce minority children (grades K thru 12) to a STEAM based education and inspire a lifelong love for the exploration of technology.

Recent studies have revealed that African American and Hispanic students are underrepresented in computer science and engineering programs, relative to their share of the population, while Asian students are overrepresented. Among young computer science and engineering graduates with bachelor's or advanced degrees, 57 percent are Caucasian, 26 percent are Asian, 8 percent are Hispanic and 6 percent are African American, according to American Community Survey data.

To further complicate matters, technical workers at Google, Microsoft, Facebook and Twitter, according to the companies' diversity reports, are on average 56 percent Caucasian, 37 percent Asian, 3 percent Hispanic and 1 percent African American.

The reality is that minorities are less likely than Caucasian & Asians to pursue technology based careers. According to American Community Survey data, forty percent of young Asian graduates pursue careers in technology, compared to 16 percent of African American graduates and 12 percent of Hispanics. Even more alarming, minorities are even less likely to be hired by major companies, even when they are adequately prepared for those positions.

Technology is not the future, it's now and it's only going to advance on a more rapid pace over the coming months and years. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there will be more than one million unfilled tech jobs by 2020. A technology based education is crucial for preparing the next generation, and setting them up for success in this technologically-advanced world. We want to position our children to be competitive in this discipline.

Today's generation has a much higher aptitude for learning technology than their parents just a generation prior. According to the Pew Research Center 95% of teens ages 12-17 are online, 76% use social networking sites, and 77% have cell phones. Moreover, 96% of those ages 18-29 are internet users, 84% use social networking sites, and 97% have cell phones. Well over half of those in that age cohort have smartphones and 23% own tablets.

One of the world's best-known researchers of teens and young adults—Danah Boyd of Microsoft Research—said “there is no doubt that most people who are using the new communications technologies are experiencing the first scenario as they extend themselves into cyberspace. Brains are being rewired—any shift in stimuli results in a rewiring,” she wrote. “The techniques and mechanisms to engage in rapid-

fire attention shifting will be extremely useful for the creative class whose job it is to integrate ideas; they relish opportunities to have stimuli that allow them to see things differently.”

Why not take this reality and provide to our children a pathway forward into the ever-expanding field of science and technology by giving them a head start? Simply exposing children to a structured curriculum and hands on experience will at least allow them to explore other career choices and dreams beyond sports and entertainment.

WeCode2 is kicking off our technology initiative by offering an 8-week Summer STEM Camp. Students will learn the fundamentals and framework of technology in a fun and collaborative environment.

Students will be broken into 3 age/grade categories; Grades 1-4, Grades 5-8 & Grades 9-12. Students will participate in hands on Minecraft coding labs, exercises, and an introduction to robotics. Additionally, trips to science museums and other points of interests in Central Florida will be arranged for participating students.

WeCode2 intends to serve a total of 50 students during this STEAM camp, and is giving priority to children in the Pine Hills community of Orlando. 20 students will receive a full scholarship (\$1000.00) and the remaining students will receive a partial scholarship. Parents will only be required to pay \$50/week totaling (\$400.00 for the 8-week camp).

Registration opens on April 19th and is scheduled to close on June 4, 2021.

WeCode2 is the brainchild of Keith Odom. Mr. Odom is a self-described “techie”. He developed this passion while serving as a Senior Fiscal Officer (Controller) with Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s (MIT) prestigious Media Lab. The Media Lab is MIT’s premiere research lab for new and emerging science and technology. The Lab creates disruptive technologies that happen at the edges, pioneering such areas as wearable computing, tangible interfaces, and affective computing.

Today, Mr. Odom is the CEO & Solution Architect at Axtegrity Consulting, a certified Microsoft partner specializing in ERP consulting, implementations, digital transformation and custom APP development.

While attending Microsoft’s Tech Summit in Seattle, WA a few years ago, Mr. Odom noticed that out of the thousands of attendees, less than 1% of the attendees were African American. The vast majority of those attending Microsoft’s Tech Conference were Indians, Asians or Caucasians.

When Mr. Odom returned from that tech conference, he felt an incredible burden to introduce African American children in the inner-city to technology. After spending several years of conducting research and looking at options, WeCode2 was born.

The concept is clear. During the summer break while parents are looking for suitable alternatives to give their children something to do, let's take this opportunity to offer a creative summer STEM camp. Perhaps this introduction to technology will inspire those participating to at least consider careers in technology or science.