



BUSINESS

Silicon North Stars grow in third year; long-incubating ISurTec launches from University Enterprise Labs

JULY 16, 2016 — 2:12PM



SUBMITTED BY SILICON NORTH STARS

The Silicon North Stars program sends Minnesota students who want to build tech industry skills to the Silicon Valley for a week.

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The Silicon North Stars, started in 2014 by a Google executive who hails from Minnesota, send 16 Twin Cities eighth- and ninth-graders to Silicon Valley for a week to visit tech companies, work on a few projects and dream and scheme with mentors.

“We’ve expanded,” said Steve Grove of Google, a Northfield native. Grove, along with his wife, Mary, also a Google manager, raise the \$75,000 annually from their own pocket and other supporters, including a \$6,000 grass-roots fundraiser in late June at COCO, which is their collaborative workspace.

“We’re now running quarterly ‘Minnesota Meetups’ to engage our students with the Minnesota tech community ... and through field trips to tech companies and start-ups. We’ve moved beyond just the [California] summer camp.”

Shalom Weatherspoon of Northeast Middle School and Jordan Dotson of Mississippi Academy attended the recent fundraiser and are excited about the Silicon Valley visit and exploring careers in technology?

COCO, Generation Next, and a number of local businesses support this worthy effort. The North Stars focus on traditionally underrepresented minority kids and girls who have an aptitude for technology fields.