



Contact:  
William Bertolotti, Executive Director  
Phone: (631) 468-7475  
Email: [wbertolotti@we-connect-the-dots.org](mailto:wbertolotti@we-connect-the-dots.org)

## SANDUSKY COUNTY SELECTED AS REGIONAL HOST SITE FOR BACK-TO-SCHOOL CODE-A-THON Registration Now Open for a New Kind of Learning Event

Sandusky County, OH: This January, Sandusky County will become one of five locations, including Long Island, NY, Darby, PA, Charlotte, NC, and Australia, to host the Back-To-School Code-A-Thon, a concept designed by nonprofit We Connect the Dots. "We are very excited to be hosting a Code-A-Thon site at the Neeley Center in Fremont this year," said Elizabeth Royster, a Civil Engineer for Sandusky County Engineers Office. Elizabeth along with other colleagues including Doug Steinberger a Bioengineer from Fremont are collaborating with their engineering community in Sandusky County to help close the achievement gap to bring awareness to the career opportunities in engineering. This Code-A-Thon is just a first step in their strategy to make an impact for students in Sandusky County and the surrounding communities.

The event, called the Back-to-School Code-A-Thon, is a consecutive forty-eight hour competitive gamified learning experience that teaches students how to code in HTML5, CSS, and JavaScript. We Connect The Dots has also partnered with a number of industry partners, including Microsoft, each year to bring the industry experts and communities together to support empowering the next generation of innovators. Students will work in teams of four to compete for prizes and to see who can develop the best project that addresses a social or global need while they learn valuable computer science skills that can be used outside of the classroom later in life. On hand will be partners from the technology industry who will be delivering the instruction, valuable talks about the future of tech careers, and mentor and coaching the students. The Back-to-School Code-A-Thon, now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year, has impacted hundreds of students.

"This is a discovery program for students, designed for those curious about coding, and confused about where to begin. That is why it is called a Code-A-Thon and not a Hackathon. For many students, "Hackathon" can be intimidating and push them away with a sense of I can't do that. Our program does the opposite, it brings students together to learn and have fun, and explore the possibilities with no requirements for skills at all, just the desire to want to learn. What we see as a result of our program are students building confidence and desire to explore a deeper level of knowledge. We provide the tools, resources, and support to help them take that journey. We have students who come back again and again each year who then support other students as mentors to share their knowledge with their peers." says WCTD founder Laurie Carey. "Students today need to be prepared for a job market heavily entrenched in tech and sciences, and with the gap in students participating in career paths in STEM, there is no time to waste. We can show students how to be prepared for their future, and discover what they are passionate about in the process."

Registration for the Sandusky County, OH location is open for students in all area school districts. More information regarding hosting, registration, volunteering, and sponsoring the program can be found at <http://we-connect-the-dots.org/codeathon-sponsors>

*We Connect The Dots is a nonprofit organization that inspires and educates students in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) careers through collaboration with the community, education, government and the technology industry.*

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Information about the program can be found at the WCTD website: [we-connect-the-dots.org](http://we-connect-the-dots.org) and check out a video from last year's program <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDnoTKrVkms&feature=share>