Mississippi Alliance for Women in Computing

Summer Newsletter   August 18 2017

The first few months of the MSAWC project have brought exciting outreach activities for young women in Mississippi and powerful relationship building. Our sincere thanks to all of you who have stepped up to help in a variety of ways. We will begin highlighting Alliance member activities through this newsletter in addition to the project website and Facebook (@MSAWC) that we have been using to showcase activities. If you have an activity to share, please submit that information through the msawc.org website.

~Sarah & Vemitra

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WORKING COLLECTIVELY!

ALLIANCE MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS!

Aspirations in Computing. Ms. Agusta Callaway was an outstanding guest speaker and role model at our Aspirations in Computing awards event held in February 24 in Canton MS. We recognized 28 high school women for their interests in computing! This increase is largely attributed to Dr. Julie Jordan's team at MSU who effectively communicated with public school students through their work with the MS Department of Education.

BankTel hosts MSAWC Summer Bridge. Mr. Boyce Adams Sr., CEO of BankTEL systems, hosted the MSAWC summer bridge participants at his office and took them to lunch where they were able to interact with him and members of his staff. It was a very informative meeting and luncheon!

Center for Social Entrepreneurship hosts camp in Jackson. Ms. Robin Kurtz-Lendner, CAO of Center for Social Entrepreneurship, partnered with Aspirations in Computing winner Miss Zoe Bush to offer "*GC3-Girls Code. Create. Connect.*", a summer camp that introduced 15 girls to computing with fun, interactive activities. A National Center for Women & Information Technology AspireIT grant provided much of the funding.

Tougaloo College partners with Aspirations Winner. Miss Rimika Banerjee is working with Tougaloo to offer an outreach program for girls this fall with funding from an NCWIT AspireIT grant.

Students from Louisville MS STEAM camp visit MSU. Ms. Kristi Jernigan, STEM instructor at Louisville High School, offered a STEAM camp for girls and brought the participants to MSU for a field trip. Dr. Renee Clary, MSU Associate Professor in the Department of Geosciences, provided an inspirational and informative discussion.

2017 Congressional App Challenge. Alliance members are working to encourage US Representatives from Mississippi to join the effort to encourage students to explore computer science. Representatives Harper, Kelly, and Thompson have already committed. Randy Lynn with CodeMS has been leading this effort.

MSU hosted its first Summer Bridge program for incoming freshmen women in computing majors and many of those women are receiving housing scholarships in the first MSAWC Living Learning Community. program

A **kickoff meeting** was held April 10-11 2017 in Jackson MS with a rooftop networking reception at the Old Capitol Inn followed by a meeting at Mississippi Public Broadcasting the next day. Topics supported the growth of the *MS Alliance for Women in Computing* in addition to increased reach to all underserved students through a broader collective alliance branded *Silicon South*.

The meeting was facilitated by Alliance members Cynthia Skinner & Ben Minnifield who are affiliated with College Options Foundation and are leaders in the effort to form a collaborative Silicon South. Topics of discussion in panel and interview format, included:

- Developing a Public Policy Agenda (Panel: Ms. Ruthe Farmer, Dr. Andrea Mayfield, Executive Director, MS Community College Board; Dr. David O'Gwynn, Chair of CS Department, Belhaven University)
- Unpacking STEM – MS Job prospects (Panel: Mr. Kagan Coughlin, Co-founder, BaseCamp Coding Academy; Ms. Carla Lewis, CIO, CSpire)
- Why Cyber Security is a National Priority (Dr. Craig Orgeron, MS Dept of IT Services)
- Student Testimonials (Ms. Rian Walker and Ms. Rimika Banerjee)
- Importance of Diversity to STEM and shaping MS public policy

Mississippi State University's Bulldog Bytes Program hosted two residential camps for middle and high school girls and two elementary day camps. The day camps, funded through the National Security Agency's GenCyber program, were held in Columbus and West Point and are part of an effort to take the Bulldog Bytes program to rural communities throughout the state. Currently, plans are underway to offer a similar program next summer in the Smith County School District (working with MSU Assistant Research Professor Dr. Michael Hamilton) and to expand the GenCyber girls day camp offering to Louisville and Eupora.

Multiple Alliance members came together to offer a day camp in Vicksburg this summer for boys and girls of multiple ages. The camp was held at the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center. MSU CSE graduate Ms. Corey Hollis, RCU Project Manager Mrs. Shelly Hollis, Mr. Randy Lynn on the CodeMS Leadership Team, and Pastor Roscoe Shields of Morning Star ADA Church were instrumental in getting this outreach program organized and delivered. Bulldog Bytes 2016 and 2017 camp mentor Nathan Hollis and Aspirations in Computing Winner Charmaine Beluso worked as camp mentors.

Coming Soon:

Increased collaboration with **InnovateMS** and the **CodeMS i**nitiative, including active participation in the Conference on Technology Innovation this fall in Jackson to increase MSAWC reach within the state.

Growing a **Silicon South collective effort**, expanding beyond the borders of Mississippi to other Southern States, to reach all underserved groups.

HackState.org—A Mississippi hackathon organized by two MSU CSE students: Kourtney Atwell and Natalie Larkin

*Bulldog Bytes **GenCyber** Camp for Elementary Girls Columbus MS in June 2017*

"Thank you so much for thinking about me for these summer camps! They were so fun and a great learning experience…"
~Annalisa Robertson, Aspirations in Computing winner and Bulldog Bytes camp mentor, student at New Hope High School in Columbus