Base Camp Coding Academy
Newsletter

The class of 2017 will graduate on May 6th. We are proud of each of these young professionals for what they have accomplished this year. However, for Base Camp the metric for success has always been the employability of our graduates. Do the skills and practices learned at Base Camp over this intense year of learning translate into a job-ready young professional that brings value to the marketplace?

So far, the answer is a resounding yes. We are excited to share that *every* student has accepted an employment opportunity following graduation. (Over 70% of the class received more than one offer.)

This is a testament to our teachers, mentors, and the large community of volunteers who have contributed to the Base Camp education, the core coding skills as well as all those difficult-to-quantify skills that make a well rounded professional.

This is also a testament to the companies that have seen the potential in this new training model, and have adapted their hiring practices to support a young person entering the workforce for the first time.

Thank you all. These are the lives that you have helped change this year:

Base Camp Fundraiser:
We will be gathering in Taylor, MS, on May 4th to celebrate the accomplishments of the inaugural Base Camp class.
Buy tickets here: https://basecampcodingacademy.org/fundraiser
(More details below.)

Classroom Progress:
Thesis projects have been turned in, and each student has returned to the classroom after spending a full 40-hour workweek shadowing with one of our industry partners.

Many of the nerves that have been traveling through the class as they approach graduation were addressed by their experiences during this job-shadowing. We forget how many new and potentially intimidating things are part of working in a new company, from security badges, to knowing where to go in a large building, to understanding job expectations and when and who to ask for help. There has been a notable sense of relief and calm self-assurance in the classroom.

The remainder of the time before graduation will focus on production-level practices and languages that are going to be the day-to-day working environment for many of the graduates.

Classroom Visitors:
An unexpected component of Base Camp has been the opportunity to meet folks from all over the state and country who are looking to start new coding initiatives. Many of these interactions are virtual, with folks reaching out from a distance, and we are always happy to hear about these efforts and offer whatever nuggets of wisdom and guidance we have to share. (Currently there are Base Camp inspired efforts starting in our home state, New Mexico, Kentucky, and Oregon.)

Less frequently we get an in-person visit. Last month we hosted Corey Redd, the robotics coach at The Piney Wood School. Their robotics program is only a few years old, and has been competing all over the state. Expanding their coding focus would give their students a competitive edge, so Corey and a colleague made the long drive to visit Base Camp to learn more about what we are doing here, meeting with our instructors and spending the afternoon in the classroom with the students.

Field Trips:
The class was welcomed at the CSpire offices in Ridgeland for a full day of interviews, tours, and the opportunity to spend time paired with a CSpire developer to observe and ask questions. The CSpire team did an amazing job of explaining the scale and complexity of a large technology company, and the role that a software developer fills in that ecosystem.

Next it was a trip to Laurel, Mississippi, to visit the headquarters of Howard Industries. The breadth of the tech and advanced manufacturing business community in Mississippi is a surprise to many, and this opportunity to tour Howard Industries opened all of our eyes a little more. Along with the warm welcome each student was granted an interview during the visit.

The following week, (a non-classroom day taken from the Spring Break schedule,) Leigh Anne and Sean Tuohy on behalf of their Make it Happen Foundation hosted the class in Memphis, where each student was taken shopping for a new interview outfit. I think the picture says it all.

Class of 2018!
The class of 2018 is taking shape, with students from Coldwater, North Panola, Charleston, Bruce, Water Valley, and Oxford High Schools currently accepted.

Prospective students from Lafayette, Pontotoc, and the above schools are in the pipeline. We are prepared for an incoming class of 25, and will continue to accept nominations until we have reached that number. If you know of a rising senior with a strong work ethic, bright mind, and limited opportunities following graduation, please consider nominating them to Base Camp. www.basecampcodingacademy.org/nominate

We have enjoyed the new opportunity this year for prospective Base Camp students to visit the classroom and connect with a current student to get a first-hand understanding of what Base Camp requires and the opportunities it represents.

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:
We are excited to announce the addition FedEx as a Founding Sponsor. Under the leadership of Bob Bortz, Director of Human Resources, and his team, FedEx has launched a new program called Pathfinder, specially designed to identify top talent from non-traditional education paths.

FedEx has taken the further step of establishing a separate grant to help Base Camp graduates transition to the workforce. This grant will be applied towards the first three months of housing costs for students who move to Memphis to work at the FedEx headquarters, as well as assistance with furnishing, clothing, and bridge-expenses to carry the new professionals through to their first paycheck.

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:
Graduation will be held on Saturday, May 6th, at 2 pm at the Big Truck Theater in Taylor, MS.
(736 Old Taylor Road)

Founding Partners:
Northwest Mississippi Community College
Founding Sponsors:
Diane and Dickey Scruggs
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Make it Happen Foundation

JOIN US FOR A

FUNDRAISER

AND *celebration*

to support

BASE CAMP CODING ACADEMY

THURSDAY, MAY 4 • 6:30PM - 10:00PM

Sunset Farm-to-Table Supper

Cocktail Reception

SIGNATURE COCKTAIL PROVIDED BY CATHEAD VODKA

Four Course Dinner and Wine Pairing

PREPARED BY

CHEF NICK REPPOND *and* ANGIE SICUREZZA *of*

GRIT

on the lawn of

PLEIN AIR, TAYLOR, MISSISSIPPI

following dinner

PRIVATE MUSIC SHOW
AT THE

BIG TRUCK THEATRE

FEATURING

FORMER DIRE STRAITS GUITARIST

JACK SONNI & FRIENDS

Smart Casual Attire

$250 PER PERSON

or

$1,500 VIP PACKAGE

includes 4 dinner tickets, show table,
bourbon & cigars after party with the band

SPACE IS LIMITED

Support Base Camp by purchasing your tickets at
www.basecampcodingacademy.org/fundraiser. *If you have any*
additional questions, please email sage@basecampcodingacademy.org.

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