Base Camp Coding Academy
Newsletter

Base Camp Coding Academy launched in June of 2016 looking to answer three questions: Can a young Mississippian without a college opportunity learn to write software in 12 months? Will these young professionals be competitive candidates for jobs in this region? Does a program like this make economic sense?

Two years later, with two graduated classes and a third currently in session, we have learned the answers to these questions.
1) Yes. A young Mississippian who has just graduated from high school can learn to write software in 11 ½ months of intensive training.
2) Yes.
    a. 100% of Base Camp graduates have received job offers by the time they graduate, and this year the students averaged more than 2 offers each.
    b. The number of employers that recruited Base Camp students this spring doubled from the previous year.
    c. Base Camp graduates are currently employed at CSpire, FedEx, MTrade, Corelogic | FNC, and the University of Mississippi.
3) Yes. The cost to provide this opportunity is under $15,000 per student.
    a. From a business perspective, this compares favorably to the cost of locating, hiring, and relocating new employees from out of state. (From another perspective: Federal and state income taxes collected on wages these graduates earn offset this investment within 15 months.)

The past two years have allowed us to improve student recruitment and vetting, career guidance, and classroom culture. The invaluable integration with our local companies has allowed our curriculum to grow and respond to current market demands.

The opportunity to conduct this pilot occurred because of our Founding Sponsors and Northwest Mississippi Community College. Thank you for creating this opportunity.

After two years of stress testing this idea, Base Camp Coding Academy is ready to grow. We hope you will grow with us.

Spring 2018

On May 12th, we celebrated the graduation of the second Base Camp Coding Academy class. (Affectionately know as Version 2.0.)

From left to right:

Shedlia Freeman: Corelogic | FNC
Jose Vargas: MTrade
Edgar Guzman: CSpire
Valente Alvarez: National Center for Computational Hydroscience and Engineering at the University of Mississippi
Lizeth Buenrostro: CSpire
Alexandra Foster: CSpire
Jo'Tavious Smith: CSpire
Osvaldo Quinonez: CSpire
Trey Shelton: Corelogic | FNC

On June 4th, the class of 2019 arrived to begin their journey at Base Camp.

Timothy Bowling	Bruce
Cody van der Poel	Charleston
Dalton Cole Anderson	Charleston

Desma Hervey	Charleston
John Morgan	Charleston
Henry Moore	Coffeeville
Andrew Wheeler	Lafayette
Jakylan Standifer	Lafayette
Ginger Keys	Magee
Justice deLong Taylor	North Panola
Logan Harrell	Oxford
Myeisha Madkins	Oxford
Matthew Moses Lipsey	Pontotoc
Daniel O'neal Peterson	Water Valley
Irma Patton	Water Valley
Ray Turner	Water Valley

Second Annual Celebration and Fundraiser:
For the second year we gathered in Taylor, Mississippi, to celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates, and put a little operating money into the Base Camp account. Thank you to Grit, and all of our friends and sponsors for joining us and helping put $10,000 towards future Base Camp expenses.

A special Thank You to Joe York, who donated a short documentary film following Martin Guzman, a 2017 Base Camp graduate who now works with CSpire. The video can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuT3XzgZWAc

Corporate Campus Visits:
In early February Base Camp was welcomed at the corporate offices of MTrade in Oxford, MS. A special treat, one of ou hosts at MTrade was Ricky Kiesling, a Base Camp alumni from the class of '17.

Later in February the class spent a day at the FedEx corporate headquarters in Collierville, TN, learning about the many career opportunities for a young software developer across the organization. Along with the Pathfinder team, our hosts included Jacob Spence, Base Camp class of '17.

In March the class enjoyed a day at the CSpire headquarters in Ridgeland, MS. The team of hosts included Carla Lewis, CIO of CSpire, (and a board member of Base Camp,) team leads from across the organization, and four Base Camp alumni from the class of '17. The day at CSpire included job-shadowing time with software engineers, as well as job interviews.

Each Base Camp student leaves the classroom for a week in the spring to spend 40 hours shadowing software engineers in a local company. The lessons learned in this week are specific to the work life of a software engineer, but they also answer all the little questions and uncertainties that might arise for any new employee working in a corporate environment for the first time. Thank you CSpire, Renasant Bank, and Corelogic | FNC for teaching, feeding, and in several cases housing our students during this week.

The class was able to attend and provide volunteer support at Northwest Mississippi Community College's Information Technology Competition in Senatobia, MS.

Three students volunteered at the Sue's Tech Kitchen as part of CSpire's MVMT 2018, an ongoing initiative to encourage local youth to become interested in tech, and pursue education and career opportunities in these fields.

For the second year the Tuohy family and their Making it Happen Foundation took the entire Base Camp class on a shopping trip to purchase business wardrobes.

Classroom Visitors:
We enjoyed a visit from the USDA in the form of State Director John Rounsaville and our Area Director Renee Crafton. They both spent several hours learning about Base Camp, and sharing their work to improve rural education opportunities across Mississippi.

In April the Base Camp class was treated to a workshop that is normally experienced by executive teams at Fortune 500 companies. Larry Carbonetti of Crow Hill Consulting in Chester, VT, donated a full 8-hour course on Effective Presentations. By the end of the day students, (even the shyest members of the class,) were hopping out of their seats to share impromptu presentations on their thesis projects.
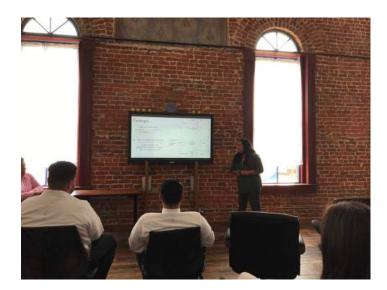
Just a few weeks later, each student presented their Thesis project to an audience of their classmates, the Board, and several mentors. They each did a wonderful job.

A few days later they graduated.

A few days after that they started their careers as software developers.

Stay up to date with Base Camp activities here:

https://www.facebook.com/basecampcodingacademy/
https://www.instagram.com/basecampcoding/

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