

Universities, Middle and High Schools Can Collaborate to Celebrate CSEdWeek! Learn from the University of Puerto Rico!

During CSEdWeek 2010, a university sought out local middle and high school students to tell them about computer science and the role it plays in our everyday lives...

Who: Computer Science educators, students at the University of PR, Mayaguez, and local middle and high school students.

What: To mark CSEd Week, the students from the University of Puerto Rico wanted to share their interest in computer science and encourage local middle and high schoolers to go on to college and pursue computer science and related fields. The university students thought that young people did not clearly understand the enormous role of computing in everyday life, so they focused on a CSEd Week-suggested theme: our lives without computer science.

The university community invited middle and high schoolers to CSEdWeek events and, as part of a competition sponsored by the Computing Alliance for Hispanic Serving Institutions (CAHSI), the students developed, created and produced a video on what life would be like without computer science, in both English and Spanish. (The video was honored with first place in the competition, it can be seen here, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9K9vXHn22zl&noredirect=1>)

The students also prepared a presentation using hardware and software for a game of “Simon Says.” Playing the game gave middle and high school students a better understanding of how computer hardware and software are interconnected.

There was also a deliberate message conveyed during all of the activities: both girls and boys are welcome in the computing community. In fact, the problem-solving aspects of computing are particularly interesting to young females.

Why: Creating the video and working with the Simon Says game gave the students an opportunity to better understand how important computing is in our daily lives. They also shared their excitement for the field. Computer science became more tangible and more accessible for the younger students, who could see themselves as possible computer scientists.

Computing is a key driver of economic growth and societal change. Many of the most exciting and best paying jobs in the STEM fields right now require knowledge of computer science but far too few students have the opportunity to explore the field or take engaging and rigorous computer science courses. Ensuring access to quality K-12 computer science education is crucial to America’s competitiveness in the 21st Century.

To learn more and pledge to be a part of CSEd Week visit, www.csedweek.org.