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For Immediate Release

National Coding Symposium Introduces Middle-High School and College Students to Expansive Career Field of Coding and Technology

Louisville, KY (April 20, 2021) – American Printing House for the Blind (APH) and California School for the Blind (CSB) are pleased to announce the virtual 2021 National Coding Symposium will take place Tuesday, May 11, through Friday, May 14.

The purpose of the National Coding Symposium is to demonstrate the world of coding, programming and related careers, are available and accessible to students with visual impairments. This event is co-sponsored by CareerConnect, part of the APH ConnectCenter and made possible in part by support from Fox Family Foundation.

This free, virtual event comes at a pivotal time for Computer Science related jobs, as they are growing faster than any other industry; yet the pool of potential candidates is decreasing. Only 2.5% of undergraduate degrees are awarded in Computer Science, despite a need for nearly quadruple that amount.

“We are excited to be a part of this really powerful way to connect kids with mentors in the field of Programming and Computer Science. This is a great way to introduce them to the many opportunities available in the technology field,” said Olaya Landa-Vialard, Ph.D., ConnectCenter Director.

Learning to code through classwork and after-school clubs is a regular occurrence in schools across the country. As coding is inherently accessible, the pattern of exclusion of students with visual impairments is unacceptable. This event seeks to motivate blind and low vision middle-high school and college-age students to consider the possibility of a career in programming or a career where knowledge of code can open the doors to all sorts of related job opportunities.

“Through a series of inspirational speakers, panel discussions, informational lectures, and question and answer sessions, attendees will learn about the various pathways to careers related to coding,” said Adrian Amandi, Director of the California Education Resource Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, California School for the Blind.

“Programming might not be in everyone's eventual career path, but it will certainly benefit the job seekers and leaders of tomorrow if everyone learns how to code.”

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The Coding Symposium will feature two daily keynote speakers, several presentations and multiple breakout panel sessions. Keynote speakers, presenters, and panelists come from a diverse coding career background of programmers, business leaders, entrepreneurs, inventors, hiring managers, career center directors and counselors, university and high school instructors and more.

Registration for the Coding Symposium is open and free for all attendees. While the targeted audience is students considering a career in or related to programming, the content of the symposium will benefit teachers and parents as well. Award opportunities are also available to be used towards the purchase of select technology products.

Some of the confirmed speakers, presenters and panelists include: Laura Allen, Head of Strategy for Accessibility and Disability Inclusion, Google; Jennison Asuncion, Head of Accessibility, LinkedIn; Michael Forzano, Software Development Engineer II, Amazon; Sarah Herrlinger, Senior Director, Global Accessibility Policy and Initiatives, Apple; Dean Hudson, Quality and Assurance Engineer, Apple; Jyotsna Kaki, Accessibility Testing Program Manager, Google; Josh Miele, Principal Accessibility Researcher, Amazon Lab126; Saqib Shaikh, Software Engineering Manager, Project Lead, Seeing AI at Microsoft; Kisiah Timmons, Principal Product Designer, Verizon Media and many more.

For more information and to register for the 2021 National Coding Symposium, please go to <https://aphconnectcenter.org/coding/>.

The full list of confirmed speakers, presenters and panelists and additional information can be found at <https://aphconnectcenter.org/coding/speakers/>.

About American Printing House for the Blind's ConnectCenter and CareerConnect

The APH ConnectCenter offers curated advice and resources to assist children, parents, adults, job seekers who are blind or visually impaired and their associated professionals, leading to greater independence and success in their lives. Trained staff at the ConnectCenter Information and Referral Line are always ready to help. Those looking for resources and services related to vision loss can call 800-232-5463, or visit www.aphconnectcenter.org. American Printing House for the Blind is headquartered at 1839 Frankfort Avenue in Louisville, Kentucky. To visit APH's website, please go to www.aph.org.

About California School for the Blind's California Education Resource Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

The educational outreach programs offered through the California Education Resource Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired offer no cost consultation, assessment, training, and technical assistance for educational teams and families of visually impaired students throughout California. Staff members serve as a statewide resource in the Assistive Technology Center, Assessment Center, Low Vision Clinic and Classroom,

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and Short-Term Programs, provide specific expertise designed to address the unique educational needs of students with visual impairments. Summer Academies have offered technology and coding opportunities to students since 2006. If you are interested in our Short-Term programs or other outreach opportunities, many of which are available beyond California, visit the website at www.csb-cde.ca.gov. California School for the Blind is located at 500 Walnut Avenue in Fremont, California.

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