thank you

10 wonderful years have passed since GCI first opened its door for students from all around the world to discover the wonders of the Open Source community. OSPO team, you truly made many of our dreams come true and showed us early what lies ahead in our path as software engineers. GCI is the reason why 4 years ago I finally felt the spark which ultimately led me to believe "this is exactly what I love doing" - none of which would have been possible without the effort put in by you, OSPO friends.

Google Code-In has truly been a wonderful experience as I had the opportunity to contribute to a widely-used piece of software developed by amazing people, most of whom I had the pleasure to meet during the Grand Prize trip. I had finally understood the inner dynamics of working within an organization, got to learn how to write industry-level code, and even improved my documentation and communication skills! Further down the road, I mentored GSoC and GCI for 3 consecutive years, simply because I wanted others to feel what I felt when I first saw my commit being merged within the main branch of the software's repository.

OSPO team, hats off to you. Thank you for everything that you have done and all the lives that you have changed. Even though the time has come for GCI to shut its doors, I am sure you will keep on opening other doors for everyone who one day wishes to turn on their computer and build something great for the community.

— **Alexandru-Liviu Bratosin, CCExtractor Development 2016**

Thank you so much for organizing and running the Google Code-In Program for a decade! I can only imagine running a program of this scale is not easy, and it certainly takes a great effort to coordinate thousands of high schoolers worldwide for ten years in a row! It saddens me that Google Code-In is coming to an end, but when I reflect on it, I realize it changed my entire perspective of Computer Science. It introduced me to open source and enabled me to form long-lasting friendships with the students and mentors I met through the program. The program may be coming to an end, but its impact on the world will live on forever. Thank you again for making Google Code-In a life-changing possibility.

— Collins Nji (Collin Grimm), OpenMRS 2016

Dear Google OSPO Team,

Thank you for all you have done for the future generation of learners, explorers, and innovators through your work. Time truly passes so fast, and it must be amazing to reflect upon your accomplishments with all projects, especially with the Google Code-In program. Building any program from scratch is truly a difficult feat, and I believe that Google Code-In was truly ahead of its time as a competition that not only allowed high school students to explore the vast world of open source, but it provided students with an opportunity to make a real impact in the world. I cannot speak for all participants, but I can reflect upon the impact of Google Code-In on my life. It is not an overstatement for me to say that Google Code-In had a major impact on my high school experience and was truly a catalyst that allowed me to have opportunities I could only have dreamed of in the past. From an academic standpoint, Google Code-In gave me the opportunity to work with a healthcare nonprofit alongside developers from around the world at all levels of expertise. As someone who had always been interested in STEM but primarily focused on the "S" component, I was quite lost and almost did not participate in the program. I feared that since I had only begun learning coding for a few months, I was ill prepared to participate in a coding competition. However, with the guidance of a previous Grand Prize winner who happened to attend my high school as well as my junior year technology teacher, I decided to enter the competition with the intention of only completing a few tasks. Little did I know that I would find an amazing community of nurturing mentors and eager students behind the intimidating label of a "coding competition," all united during that period of time by the magic of the Google Code-In program. The program itself not only allowed me to connect with a nonprofit in a field of my interest, but it provided me with the foundation to learn, to grow, and to succeed as a novice attempting to dip her feet in the vast world of open source. Although I initially did not plan to, I was so enticed by all of the unique tasks and the supportive community that I decided to put in my best effort and fully immerse myself in the program rather than simply completing the three tasks needed to receive a t-shirt. At the end, though I did not expect it at all given that I did not consider myself remotely "tech-savvy," I was given the opportunity to attend the Google Code-In summit in Mountainview as a Grand Prize Winner. Being able to enter the Google campus at all was something I never thought I would be able to do and attending all of the networking and informational panels opened my eyes to some of the possibilities of open source from the present and future. Meeting all of the Google employees and Google Code-In mentors, especially those who were females, gave me confidence and a sense of belonging. Even though I was one of two girls at the summit during my year, I felt welcomed and supported by everyone, and I felt like I wanted other girls to learn about the same opportunities.

After I returned from the Google Code-In summit, I served as a mentor for two years and was able to experience the program from another perspective. It is such a well-designed program that promotes growth in students, mentors, and open source experts, bridging the gaps between these populations. I hope that I was able to give back and contribute in some way to the program, even if it was miniscule in comparison to what the program gave me.

Even though on paper I am not in the field of technology, as I am studying biology and global health at a seven-year B.A./M.D. program, technology still permeates my academic life. The skills I obtained from the program allowed me to succeed in statistics and population genetics courses, as well as understand the impacts of technology on the medical field. It has also allowed me to pursue internships in mHealth as well as qualitative and quantitative analysis at medical school laboratories, and pharmaceutical companies. Learning about open source projects such as TensorFlow and the impact of machine learning on medicine has made me curious about the future of the medical profession; I hope to be able to continue to innovate within the intersection of technology and medicine. Having shadowed physicians and seen the impacts of medical technology, I hope I can use what I learned from Google Code-In to continue to address issues within healthcare to improve outcomes and address disparities.

Overall, I am incredibly grateful for all of the work your team and previous team members have done. Even though Google Code-In may have come to an end, its impact is continuous and long-lasting. The opportunity to participate in Google Code-In at all has opened so many doors for all participants, whether directly through internships at companies such as Google itself or indirectly through sparking interests or boosting confidence. I know that the team does amazing work and will continue to do so; I hope that you all can take time to appreciate and congratulate yourselves for your work and impact. Thank you for everything, and I wish you all the best in every future endeavor!

— Mira Yang, OpenMRS 2016

Google OSPO team, Thank you for such a great adventure. I couldn't imagine what my life would be without it. It truly is a turning point in my life and the sole reason for my career in the open source world and in extension, my career as an IT professional / DevOps Engineer.

In the beginning, I was only a simple hobbyist writing mods for games I love and administering game servers on the side. Without Google Code-in, It would simply end at that, I would never in my life be able to grasp the fact that I can adapt the skills I have to help various open source projects and non-profit organizations. Google Code-in has truly been a jumping point in life and career for me. The beautiful people I met, the vast network of people I've built and the circles of friends I've made would not be possible without Google Code-in.

As both a student and a mentor for 3 years, I couldn't thank you enough for the support by providing a platform for everyone to start their career in the wonderful world of open source and to notice their talents in software engineering. I really wish it doesn't end like this especially during these trying times but alas, all good things must come to an end.

From the bottom of my heart, I really can't thank you enough for all of the things you have done and the services you provided for the whole open source community.

— Muhammad Kaisar Arkhan (yuki_is_bored), FOSSASIA 2016

Thanks to the entire OSPO team and also those who are no longer a part of it for this wonderful journey! GCI was a big turning point in my life, it introduced me to wonderful people, including my mentors and GCI winners of even different years. It was my first introduction to OSS and since then I've always tried to contribute to the OSS community. It made me gain more technical skills (before GCI, I quite hated Python but GCI flipped that 180 degrees :P). And I still have and use the swag I won from GCI. It was an awesome experience and goodluck for the future!

— Soham Sen, Systers 2016

I had randomly stumbled on the Google Code-in Google+ page sometime in early 2017 as a fluke. Honestly, at first I wasn't even sure it was a real program because the page wasn't verified, so I looked further to discover that yes, it is very real and I should probably try to participate. In fact I even emailed the support team with the subject "GCI Page Authenticity" and got a reply from Josh. Fast-forward a year and I met Josh in person on my Grand Prize Winners trip!

It is absolutely crazy as to how I picked up enough programming through the course of the contest to write lasting code that still runs to this day and will probably continue to run for a long time. The program began for me as a way to score a free international trip and a flagship phone, but ended with me realizing that I have it in me to write code and design things that will be used by others.

Which is what I have been doing ever since. I've won once, mentored twice in GCI, once in GSoC and am currently a GSoC student, all because I thankfully found a certain unverified Google+ page and decided to look into it.

If I begin to list out everything I have gained directly and indirectly through the contest then we will be here for a long, long time. It is like the butterfly effect, where through GCI I was introduced to this new world and these amazing people and I've just kept going on and on. From realizing that studying in the US might be a viable option after my trip and making that happen to starting my own open source project and building a community around it or even going from not knowing any Python to speaking about it, I think it can all be traced back to GCI.

The community deserves its own paragraph. I don't think a day goes by without activity in the Winners' group or at least one interesting discussion to be had. The wonderful friends I've made and the people I've had the privilege of meeting in real life or online through the trip and the GSoC Summit, including the amazing folks at CCExtractor would not have been possible at all without Google Code-in.

As I sit here writing this wearing a Google t-shirt, I am also a bit wistful because now someone like me won't get the opportunity that I did. But I am so, so grateful to the whole team, Stephanie, Mary, Josh, Maria, Cat and everyone else who worked on the program to make it the life changing experience that it was!

Thank you and good luck in what the future holds! I hope we can meet again <3

— Aadi Bajpai, CCExtractor Development 2017

Dear Google OSPO Team,

Thanks for running Google Code-in through all these years and working really hard to inspire and give kids like me a taste of open source software development. It had taken me 3 rigorous years to earn myself the title of a Grand Prize Winner, but the journey with its down and ups were really enjoyable and inspiring. It is GCI and the experience it provided that made me devour more time to open source software development and help out the world by making useful open source software.

Over the years I worked as both a participant and also as a mentor, and have built for myself a new tender family around the organisation which you helped me encounter.

It's hard to see such a competition as GCI meets an end, but I would like to thank you all again for the commitment you showed to make Google Code-in run smoothly and wonderfully across all the 10 amazing years.

Thank you guys.

— Abishek V Ashok, FOSSASIA 2017

Dear Google OSPO Team,

Thank you so much for creating a platform where we could learn tech and other things. Unlike any other competition, I really liked how I could interact and compete with other students and develop a friendship. The whole "completing a task at the last moment" to meet you guys journey was definitely a once in a lifetime experience and I can understand how it can be a logistical nightmare to bring a bunch of kids around the world to Silicon Valley.

The whole GCI trip experience was inspiring and wonderful. I met other winners and geeked out with them on a lot of things. Fast forward to 2020 and we all are still in touch with each other. For example, my friend Kai (GCI winner from Canada) and I are working on an open-source project called PassionFruit, where I'm designing it and Kai is coding it. Thanks to GCI, I made connections with my mentors and they helped me figure out what I should do in the future, and hopefully, I'll be starting my undergrad in design this fall.

Without GCI, I would have never met such amazing people around the world and GCI was not possible without the hard work and efforts of the OSPO team. I would like to thank all of you for providing this platform where Google, open-source organizations, and mentors help develop the skills of young enthusiasts and guide their professional careers.

If there's a reboot of GCI or you guys need any help, then please reach out to us and we'll be ready to help. Once again, Thank You for building GCI and all the best for your future projects!

— **Sidhya Tikku, JBoss Community 2018**

Thank you all so much for 10 years of the Google Code-In! It was a life-changing experience, and I can only imagine how many students were inspired to contribute to open-source. I used to think that coding was for hackers in Californian garages, but GCI taught me that anybody could do it. GCI made me realize my passion for building, and it let me meet countless incredible people on the way.

Your constant work and support behind the scenes were what made all of this possible. From planning a 7-day trip for 27 teenagers to coordinating the logistics of T-shirt shipping, none of this would've been possible without all of you. I know your work often goes unthanked, but we can all feel the lasting impact on our lives and are sincerely grateful.

It's been a truly incredible journey, and I wish you all the best for the future!

— Andi Qu, Apertium 2018

Coming from a small town in the middle of nowhere in Ukraine, I had no exposure to coding here. Everything I knew about CS was from the online courses I took by myself. No one I knew was into this either, so I didn't even have a community to discuss my findings.

When I accidentally found out about GCI, my world changed. For the very first time, I had an opportunity to get real feedback for my code. At the same time, I was able to contribute to an amazing impact-driven organization, which made it even more exciting for me as a social activist. Although the contest was full of challenges, I learned a ton. That's when I realized that I want CS to become my career. After the competition, I got to connect with other winners, who became the community I was looking for.

I am incredibly grateful for all the hard work you have put into making the Google Code-In happen for the past 10 years. I don't know what kind of person I would be both personally and professionally if I didn't have that experience. Thank you for making it possible to participate even from the most remote areas of the world. You have changed lives, at least mine.

— **Svitlana Honcharuk, OpenMRS 2018**

I can't thank enough for having organised 10 years of GCI. It's everything that has made me what I am today. GCI is what introduced me to tech and I'll be forever grateful to it. This program has taught me technical skills and life skills, all in a span of 7 weeks, but more importantly, it has let me meet some amazing people.

I cannot imagine the hard work that goes into making this a success, year after year. From replying to each email, coordinating with 50+ winners from around the globe, to managing every bit of detail of the trip, I can without hesitation say that it was a dream come true.

Thank you for making this possible, it has truly been an incredible journey!

— Oorjit Chowdhary, Public Lab 2018

Google Code-in was such a great experience for me. I would have never thought that I would be able to experience this. I got so inspired by the people I met along the way and I did not only improve my skills and evolved career wise because of it but I also met great people with great stories. It opened me to even bigger opportunities in the future and I am so thankful for this awesome project the Google Open Source team worked so hard to host.

— Alexandru Marginean, Fedora Project 2018

Thank you very much for 10 years of Google Code-in. Many valuable experiences that I had when participating in Google Code-in. Start from interacting with Software Engineers from Open Source Organization. I learned a lot from them how to build software in the right way. I met with other students around the world with different backgrounds. Participating in Google Code-in is a very great experience in my life. Once more, I want to say thank you for everyone involved in Google Code-in.

— Reza Juliandri, OpenWISP 2018

Hey Stephanie and Google Open Source Team. It has been 4 years since I started my journey with Google Code-in. 4 Magnificent years of meeting new friends, learning new things, improving myself and having fun while contributing to Open Source! Google Code-in opened the doors for me to see what it's like to work in Computer Science, the things behind the scenes I didn't know and what goes in to make a project successful.

I'm out of words to tell you how wonderful this experience was. From finding out about Google Code-in till the very last day when I read the announcement. You changed my view of the world and connected me to people who I can say are one of my best friends.

I'm really thankful to Google Code-in and the OSPO team and everyone who made it possible and invested so much energy and effort for 10 Years, which I know is hard. I'll be forever thankful for providing this opportunity to me along with everyone else. My only wish is to travel again to San Francisco and hug you all again and say this in person instead. I'll be forever grateful and never forget what you have done for us.

Thank you for hosting this amazing competition and connecting teenagers like us to each other and our mentors who were there to guide us on the journey of Open Source, Teamwork, Writing Good code and documentation so everyone can easily jump on the train and begin contributing.

If it wasn't for GCI I wouldn't have been here writing this Thank you letter. My final words are a quote "It's about the Journey, not the destination"

— Matej Plavevski, CCExtractor Development 2018

GCI has been really close to my heart ever since I participated for the first time in 2017. These three years were like a rollercoaster ride, learning lots of new stuff, making new friends, gaining a first hand experience at open source software development, and whatnot. It has shaped my career in a really positive and amazing way.

It's really sad to see the program end but I guess there's an end to everything. Words fall short to describe how I feel.

Thank you all for all your hard work put in this program through the years.

Thank You Google OSPO Team!
A BIG THANK YOU!

— Sagar Khatri, Drupal 2018

Thank you so much to all of the Google Open Source team for having organised GCI for the past 10 years. It was truly an amazing and life-building experience that I got to take part in over the course of three years. Google Code-In introduced to the world of open source, which I highly enjoy, and greatly improved my programming skills. I will miss taking part in the contest, and of course, miss all the amazing prizes that you generously offered.

I cannot fathom how much work was necessary to make Google Code-In work, and I feel that all this work is often not appreciated to the extent it should be. Many take this competition for granted, but it must have been incredibly complicated to make it run as smoothly as it did.

I will forever be grateful to all of you, and I wish you the best in your future endeavours.

— Diogo Fernandes, Apertium 2019

GCI was an incredible opportunity for me to meet other young, interesting people that shared my interest in tech. I made so many kind friends and I can't thank your team enough for allowing this to happen.

Your program taught me about how to collaborate on a common project and develop best practices for programming, but most of all, it helped me encounter amazing people. For this I owe you my heartfelt gratitude, and some sadness that other kids won't be able to have the same opportunity I was so kindly given.

— Uzay Girit, Publiclab 2019

I still remember when I learned about GCI for the first time, somewhen in the summer of 2018. I was very excited and couldn't wait for it to begin. Since then, winning the contest has become my biggest dream. It kept me motivated to always learn more, work hard and strive for doing my best. Finally, the morning when I got that email was one of the happiest moments in my whole life.

I have gained a lot of knowledge and experience and met many awesome people. It would have never been possible without your hard work and truly inspiring passion.

It's funny that the most important thing in Google Code-in was not code, but people.

Thank you for making this possible.
Thank you for everything.

— Bartek Pacia, Systers 2019

Thank you so much Google Open Source team for making GCI such a resounding success over the past 10 years. I am so blessed to be a part of the amazing program and it couldn't have been possible if not due to the great mentors and volunteers, program administrators, etc. that contributed to the success of introducing young students to open source development.

Those 7 weeks were tough. I grinded day in and day out. I loved every second of it and looked forward to working and learning everyday. I am so lucky and I can't express how much I owe to this contest. Being named a GCI Grand Prize Winner has opened up a whole new world of new and exciting possibilities this year, and every time I look back I am so grateful for these amazing opportunities with regards to computer science and software engineering.

Once again, thank you for everything, and I wish you all the best!

— **William Zhang, TensorFlow 2019**

GCI has been an amazing learning opportunity for me; as well as allowing me to explore various technologies, also encouraged me to begin making more contributions to open source. I am so thankful that I've had the honour of taking part in this experience, and I've deeply grateful for all the work that the Open Source team put in.

From the day I first found out about GCI to today, I've met so many people. I've learned so much. I've developed the skills that I can apply to so many other aspects of life: collaboration, teamwork, and interpersonal skills. But most importantly, I've made so many friends.

For the first time in my life, I felt that I could make a difference with my code with GCI. Thank you for organizing this amazing experience for the past ten years. Thank you for allowing thousands of teens worldwide to explore open source. And most of all, thank you for allowing me to make so many great friends.

— Emilie Ma, Liquid Galaxy 2019

Thank you for taking the time over the past 10 years to run Google Code-in. This gave me a head start into the world of open source development, which I don't know if I would have ventured into on my own. It also unlocked a great community of like-minded people with similar interests and passions which I had not experienced before.
Good luck with everything in the future, and thanks again!

— Josh Heng, CircuitVerse 2019

Thank you very much to the Google OSPO team for organizing the Google Code-in contest for 10 years. It has come a long way in promoting programming as a skill in pre-university students. I am grateful to have been allowed to just participate - gain that learning experience, spend time with mentors and work on a previously little-explored passion.

After the 6-week contest, the journey itself had made such a positive impact, winning just made it even better. It was truly a one of a kind event. Especially for someone like me, who lives in a not-so-big town in a developing country. I wouldn't otherwise have found the encouragement to take up development. It validated my passion, not only for myself but for people around me. I am grateful to GCI to be able to feel more confident in doing what I love.

The community I found because of GCI is really great, not only other winners but also mentors and other participants. The network is already a great asset and it will be of great help in the future as well.

Once again, thank you to the Google OSPO team for taking the efforts to organize 10 Google Code-in's. It has made a positive difference in the lives of many and it will be remembered for a long time.

— Kaustubh Maske Patil, CloudCV 2019

It's been 10 years since Google Code-In started. But I came to know about it last year. I was always worried why I couldn't get to know about Google Code-In earlier. 7 weeks of participation in Google Code-In taught me a lot of things that I haven't even learned from my whole life. Those days I was actively engaged in finishing tasks in the Google Code-In were the Best days of my life and the winning moments couldn't be expressed using words.

Google Code-In exposed me to the world of Open Source. It gave me the opportunity to show my skills to the whole world . Moreover I got a lot of friends through Google Code-In who are one of the best.

It's quite a work to organize such an amazing contest like Google Code-In. Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to join in the journey. We will always be grateful for that.

— Maathavan, Apertium 2019

Dear Google OSPO Team,
Thank you for this life experience, which was a Google Code-in. It opened a world full of opportunities, allowed me to meet amazing people and gave me a feeling that I can achieve everything if I want to.

In 2017, I started for the first time. I looked at the tasks list, and I couldn't imagine that I can complete them. I finished with three tasks completed, t-shirt and a dream.
In 2018, I started for the second time. I decided that I'll give my best. I finished with finalist title, experience, knowledge and friends. I was 16 then, so I knew that I had last chance in 2019 to take part as a participant.
In 2019, I started for the third ti
me. I had to give even more than last year because I knew that I wouldn't have another chance. I finished with the winner title and even more experience, knowledge and friends. It assured me that if I will try enough, I can achieve every distant goal.

All good things come to an end, but Google Code-in and its community will remain a big part of my life.
Thank you so much.

— Artur Grochal, Drupal 2019

thank you