

PROGRAM PARAGRAPHS:

Our signature course, BCAUSEICANCODE, was developed by two of our IT professional founders in conjunction with University of Maryland volunteers. BCAUSEICANCODE teaches computer coding using the SCRATCH¹ programming language for children. SCRATCH is a free, popular programming language developed by the MIT Media Lab. It has been translated into 70+ languages and is used in most parts of the world. SCRATCH allows students to create and share their projects with others around the world, promoting collaboration, reasoning, and creativity.

During the course, each student is assigned a laptop and userid allowing personal access to the SCRATCH programming portal. The students can create, modify, and save projects as they are assigned. The projects are both individual and team-oriented. Problem solving, analysis, coding, and collaboration skills are developed.

The Kahoot² game-based learning platform is also used to reinforce topics. Kahoot is a free, game-based learning platform that allows kids to create their own fun learning games.

The BCAUSEICANCODE program serves a core group of students throughout the year in 3 distinct age groups: Little Peeps (K-1st), StarStruck (2nd-3rd) and MotorThunder (4th-5th). The courses are held in sixteen week sessions throughout the academic school year. Each group receives at least 11 hours of instruction during the 16 week session.

Classes are held at our partner locations, such as the Shaw Community Center, Georgetown University, and University of Michigan. The Shaw Community Center³, located in Northwest Washington, D.C., is committed to enhancing the lives of citizens of the Shaw community. The center hosts many courses and opportunities for children and adults.

More than 250 students have benefited from over 100 BCAUSEICANCODE classes. Our current program has mainly targeted children from Cleveland Elementary School.

BCAUSEICANCODE offers an additional 6 week summer camp session from June to early July. Summer camp introduces new students who cannot attend programming during the traditional school year.

Because we take a holistic approach, social and behavioral skills are embedded in all of our courses. We take youth out to our partner events such as Georgetown University campus tours and basketball games, Kennedy Center plays, and Washington, DC museums to model and teach appropriate manners and behaviors in these environments. We have also partnered with Google to allow our students to tour their offices in Washington, DC.

¹ Nd, MIT Media Group, Cambridge, MA, viewed 02/26/2019, <https://scratch.mit.edu/>

² <https://kahoot.com/what-is-kahoot/>

³ <http://shawcommunity.org/>

Students are given a pre-assessment and post-assessment quiz for knowledge and understanding of coding and technology topics. Additionally, the BCAUSEICANCODE SCRATCH portal allows instructors to track student progress.

At the end of the BCAUSEICANCODE course, kids understand coding terms and concepts and can write programs using SCRATCH. They show increasing confidence in using computers and see the benefits of being computer literate. The students are more disciplined, engaged, and willing to learn. Long term, students will understand that there is a future in coding and aspire for post-secondary education and jobs in technology fields. Without nonprofit organizations such as BCAUSEICAN, these students may never realize their potential to be successful, contributing members of their community.