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Students prep for the Patriots' "Video Jam" at pre-workshops in Prince George's County, Md.



PATRIOTS 'VIDEO JAM' IS A HIT

Video games are a \$93-billion industry and one of the favorite pastimes of today. So maybe it's no wonder that more than 150 persons turned out this past Dec. 7th for the Patriots Technology Training Center's Video Jam 2013 Conference and Design Competition, in Largo, Md. The event gave Patriots members, including members of the group's NSBE Jr. chapter, the opportunity to design, develop and program their very own video game, and have a great time. The conference/competition was held at Prince George's Community College.

Video Jam 2013 was a great success, thanks to the volunteer assistance received from the parents of the 5th through 12th graders who participated, and the continued, generous support from the event sponsors: DeVry University, Microsoft Corporation, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Prince George's Community College, Prince George's County Memorial Library System, Safeway, Verizon and the National Society of Black Engineers.

Students began preparing for the one-day event in October and November, at free pre-workshops. The preparation included training in the use of Microsoft's Kodu programming language, and a tutorial designed by DeVry University and the Patriots NSBE Jr. Chapter. The pre-workshops were held at four public library branches in Prince George's County (Surratt's-Clinton, Largo, Oxon Hill and South Bowie); at a meeting hosted by 100 Black Men of Greater Washington, D.C.; at Sojourner Douglass Middle School College, in Edgewater, Md.; and at the Bluford Drew Jemison STEM Academy, in Baltimore, Md.

On Dec. 7th, competition day, the students were off to the workshops, as the video game coordinator, Barry Abrams of the Patriots Parent Committee, provided direction. The workshops were led by instructors Roderick Woodruff, of the Urban Video Game Academy and S.T.E.M. SMARTWHEELS; Shahnaz Kamberi of DeVry University; Ricky McCallum of the University of Maryland, Baltimore, and the Rev. J.B. Bradford of ProfXs.h.o.n. Works Ministries. Members of the NAVAIR NSBE Professionals chapter also assisted with the workshops as competition judges and in other capacities.

Teams of four students were formed, and the competition began. Judges were stationed in each workshop and monitored the design and development of the games. At the end of two hours, it was show time, and the final competition began. Choosing the winners was difficult. All of the students were energized, and their creativity was at its best. ■



Professor Shahnaz Kamberi (center) with Patriots students, at DeVry University

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR VIDEO GAME DESIGN WINNING TEAMS:

First Place

Nichelle French, Wise High School; Amber Harris, Saunders Middle School and Jahmari Samuel, Laurel High School

Second Place

Kamara Manzie, Khalil Manzie, Hunter Wolfe and Kenneth Brooks, all of Highland Park Christian Academy

Third Place

Jamar Lee, John Burroughs Education Campus; Donovan Chappell, Thomas Stone High School; Jeremiah Holdbrook, Cesar Chavez High School and David Miles, Mount Rainer Elementary School

Prizes, which went to each member of the winning teams, were as follows: first place, \$100 gift card; second place, \$50 gift card; third place, \$25 gift card.

Patriots extends a special "Thank you!" to our KoduPresenters, students who helped train other students in the use of the software: David Bedenbaugh, Sean Gamble, Kayla Hodge, Koloni Hodge, Rashaun Martin, Kahlil Robert Newman, Julie Dale Rupal and Ramar White.



Gaming to win, at the conference/competition (Dec. 7, 2013)