

Name: Grace Gebara

Title: Miss Fulton

Kids Who Code

“What am I doing here?” I thought to myself as I walked into the first day of my AP Computer Science class. I looked around at my classmates in dismay, for all of them except three were male. On top of that, they did not see me as the type of girl that typically took on the challenge of Java coding. I certainly had doubts but my brother, a computer science major, had previously promised me that I would love this class because of the creative problem solver I am. I didn’t have a clue about coding, other than my preconceived image of a hermit behind a computer screen hacking into something. I didn’t think that an extrovert like me would be able to let her creativity soar behind a computer screen, but I was wrong. As I learned more about coding, I fell in love. I found my passion for computer science, and I want to help other kids just like me discover that they can become Kids Who Code.

I am an advocate for all students to learn about the field of computer science, and in particular, females. The gender gap in computing is getting worse by the year. In 1995, 37% of computer scientists were women, whereas today it is only a staggering 24%. If no action is taken, the number is estimated to shrink to a mere 22% within the next ten years. In 2018, though, only about 50,000 computer science students graduated into the workforce. This is a miniscule number when you compare it to the 500,000 available computer science jobs nationwide. On top of that, less than 1 in 5 of them were women. Computer science offers a number of lucrative jobs, and these jobs are here to stay. The projected growth of employment of software developers is 24%, and application developers is 31%. Computer science is the number one source of all new wages in the United States and makes up over half of all projected new jobs in STEM fields.

I have fought for this issue in my own community. I helped take the lead on organizing and facilitating the Hour of Code at my own high school. The Hour of Code is a program that intends to demystify coding, and every single student in the school plays a game that teaches the problem solving skills required for computer science for an entire hour. I taught hundreds of my peers about one of my newly discovered skills, and I encouraged them to try coding classes as well. I have brought my passion to my own school and created an all girls coding club, beginning next school year. I also am the Skills USA representative for computer science, which means I get to practice my computer science skills in a competitive way. I am an official partner of the organization “Girls Who Code”, which advocates for girls in coding and gives them the resources to learn more about coding.

As Miss Fulton, I plan to facilitate and promote the Hour of Code in schools across Georgia. I will speak with schools about doing their own Hour of Code on a larger scale, encompassing the whole school. I want to secure a meeting with Georgia legislators. With said legislators I will discuss my platform and get them on board with advocating for an increase in the teaching of computer science at schools. I hope to further my relationship with the “Girls Who Code” organization, and help bring girls to their camps. I plan on meeting with various Fulton County school PTAs, starting with my own, and I will discuss the importance of teaching their kids about this growing field. My goal is to teach kids about the opportunities available to them with this new 21st century skill. I will help them discover a passion they didn’t even know they had. The Miss Fulton organization will continue to help me achieve my goal, and help me help the Kids Who Code. As a lifelong resident of Fulton, I will be so incredibly grateful to represent my local community and proudly represent Fulton through and through.

 9.27.19
Signature/Date