

Week 1: January 12th, 2018

Dear Parents,

First and foremost, I want to thank you for enrolling your child in this year's College for Kids Program. For this course, we will be focusing on Python Programming. Python is an easy-to-learn programming language that has some really useful features for a beginning programmer. I hope that by being in this course, your child will (1) be able to discover what computer science is all about, (2) be able to apply Python programming concepts hands-on, (3) propose and develop a challenging project, and (4) have fun!!!

Today we learned some definitions and a few fundamentals of programming. We defined, computer, programming, programs, and algorithms just to start off. We also went through discussing a few data types we will see, variables, and input. We did an activity that displayed how what is done on a computer is a result of what the programmer tells it to do while simultaneously being an algorithm. I encourage you to try and point out these things and their day to day just to show them how prevalent all of this is even in their common day. We were also able to start a little bit of programming today!!

Since we have a jam packed schedule ahead of us, we also started coding on Thonny. Thonny is the program students use to write Python code. (To download the software, please go to <https://thonny.org/> and click the correct download for your computer) Their main exercise for today was to finish a madlib using variables and user input.

I am very excited to spend the next 6 weeks teaching your child how to code in Python and push them to think like computer scientists and be creative problem solvers. I encourage students to practice at home everything that we learned today. Please feel free to send me an email if you have any questions or comments about this course. I apologize for the long letter, but I look forward to working with you and your child this spring.

By way of introduction, my name is Maddie Brower. I am currently a Junior at James Madison University and I am a double math and computer science major. I was introduced to programming my sophomore year of high school and have loved it since when, this was also when I was first getting familiar with python. I love working with kids and do lots of volunteering especially when it comes to

outreach and I look forward to (hopefully) getting your children to be as excited about coding and this course as I am. If you ever need to contact me about questions or concerns my email is browermb@dukes.jmu.edu. I check this consistently throughout the day and will promise a prompt response. I have created a webpage for this course: <http://w3stu.cs.jmu.edu/browermb/collegeforkids/> it will contain all the materials that we have covered and some quick links.

Sincerely,
Maddie Brower