

Hello, World



Taken at HSHacks II. I'm in the Pikachu onesie!

Hello, World. I'm Selynna Sun, and I am the vice president of the Hack Club at Los Altos High School in California. I started coding roughly two years ago, after I attended my first hackathon, HSHacks. I had always thought programming was a boring activity, but the environment and intensity of a hackathon changed my mind entirely.

Our school had 3–4 programming clubs during the 2014–15 year, and a majority, if not all, pretty much died due to a general lack of interest and/or bad leadership. It's not to say that there aren't kids interested in computer science: we teach APCS and Intro to Computer Science at Los Altos, and there are five periods total dedicated to CS education. However, a lot of students have had more negative experiences in APCS/ICS than positive, because projects are frustrating and discourage people.

I've definitely felt this same frustration—I can safely say that I hated Java and even computer science in general for a period of time. It mainly came from staying up until 3am on a school night to debug code where a small typo would screw up literally *everything*. I'm sure all programmers have gone through that, but on a biweekly basis, it sucked. Hackathons brought me out of that negativity. School projects that may be too hard to complete aren't what anybody should be basing their opinions of CS on. The community, the learning, the building people do at hackathons is something most students don't experience.

And that's why I'm leading this club with my co-presidents—we want to help people, whether or not they have experience, realize that there are so many amazing things about CS, and that a class can't necessarily determine if they like the subject or not. In our club, we'll mostly be doing small projects, so people of various skill levels can contribute, even if most of our workshops are targeted towards beginners.

Coding is becoming a crucial skill in our society. I hope that with this club, my team and I will be able to successfully establish a strong hacker presence on campus. We aim to develop the skills of the next generation of coders at our school, and this club is the very first step.