

WE CONNECT THE DOTS WORKFORCE EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Long Island, NY: We Connect the Dots, Inc., (WCTD) an educational nonprofit organization, was awarded a \$50,000 grant from Microsoft to support students in a workforce experience program to support the City of Charlotte launch of TechCharlotte. The announcement was made at a press conference on April 3rd, 2017. The program planning began in early May with a launch date of June 16th as a part of the MYEP (Mayors Youth Employment Program) Attendees that day represented Government, Community Partners, and Students who were invited to kick off the start of the annual program with the introduction of a new branded “TechCharlotte” program to support students ages 16-24 with technology industry experiences, education, and application. This program supports underserved student populations in diverse communities with a goal to support a gender diversity of 50% females participating in the program.

“The value of a workforce experience program for these students and its experiential learning cannot be understated,” says WCTD founder Laurie Carey. “Students today need to be prepared for a job market heavily entrenched in tech and sciences, and with the gap in students participating in career paths in STEM, there is no time to waste. We can show students how to be prepared for their future, and discover what they are passionate about in the process.”

The program was set in alignment with the MYEP and the goals of the City of Charlotte to support students in STEAM careers.

Each of the students experienced a two-week training program with a final capstone team project, followed by a six-week workforce experience at local Charlotte Not For Profit organizations. During the six-week workforce experience students participated in online collaborative mentoring sessions, both real-time with their peers and with We Connect The Dots mentors each week during scheduled calls.

Currently, North Carolina has more than 17,000 unfilled technology jobs with an average annual salary of \$87,000.

We Connect The Dots is a nonprofit organization that inspires and educates students in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) careers through collaboration with the community, education, government and the technology industry.

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Information about the program can be found at the WCTD website:
we-connect-the-dots.org/blog/2017/9/20/workforce