

Moraga Library makes coding accessible to everyone

Submitted by Brian Harrison



In the picture: Sara Harrison, Brian Harrison, and Jayin Joshi Photo provided

Moraga Library partnered with eSTEAM Computer Science Club to offer two weeks of free Scratch and Python coding workshops.

In the Scratch workshop, the class was divided into the beginner and advanced groups. Jayin Joshi, a tenth grader at Campolindo High School who taught the advanced level, introduced his students to different elements of game design while they worked on their own unique project throughout the week. "It was fun watching the kids make their projects and grow with new concepts," he reflected.

Brian Harrison, who is also a tenth grader at Campolindo, taught the Beginner Scratch class. He really enjoyed teaching and getting to know each of his students. "I'm very impressed at how quickly my students developed a strong understanding of the fundamentals of Scratch. I'm incredibly

proud of them."

Students worked on daily projects and a long-term project. Parents were invited to attend Show-And-Tell on the last day of the weeklong workshop and each student presented their long-term projects. One Scratch student told the volunteers excitedly, "I am so happy that I now have a coding family."

The Python workshop took place the week of July 1. Sara Harrison, an eighth grader from Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School who taught at the workshop and helped write the curriculum, said: "It was challenging to write the curriculum because we had to fit so many topics into a week-long workshop but, in the end, it was so rewarding to see how much everyone got out of the workshop and enjoyed programming in Python!" Guy Sandler from Campolindo and Evie

Napolitan from Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School also helped at the workshops as teaching assistants to provide more individual supports throughout the weeks.

Parents were truly impressed by the students' progress and creativity after watching the Show-And-Tell. Moraga Library Branch Manager Rita Carrasco, who helped organize and support the workshop, was very pleased with the results. "I can't believe how well the kids learned to program!" she praised. On the last day of the workshops, each student was presented with a certificate and STEAM prizes donated by Sydney-Paige Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit who has served over a quarter million students since 2013 by collecting and distributing new school supplies, books, and toys so students can have the tools and confidence needed to learn and thrive.

eSTEAM Computer Science Club is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in Moraga that has offered free summer coding workshops for underprivileged students in Contra Costa County since summer 2023. eSTEAM Computer Science Club also offers free year-round American Computer Science League (ASCL) tutoring workshops and hosted local contests since 2021.

Moraga Library birthday



Photo Vera Kochan

Kids help Mayor Teresa Onoda blow out the candles.

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A new type of library came to town in the form of a bi-weekly book mobile courtesy of the county. Between 1956-1969, Moraga's 1,033 residents were experiencing a different library format.

Wanting to create some permanency, the Friends of the Moraga Library was formed in 1967, thanks to the efforts of Jerry Meyer. By 1969, the Pacific Telephone Company's auxiliary building, at the corner of Munster Drive (now Country Club Drive) and School Street, was leased to the Friends for five

years (rent-free), because the building was scheduled for eventual demolition. Today, it's still standing and is the home of the Moraga School District. That library's book volume grew to 7,500 while the town's population increased to 8,579.

Still searching for a place to build a new library, it's current location was selected in 1970, and in 1971, the land was purchased for \$55,000. The Moraga Library as we know it today was opened on Sept. 22, 1974, at a cost of \$700,000.

"Therefore, you can understand the celebration in 1974 to finally

have an independent, permanent library for this growing town of 11,352 residents," stated Sperry. "As seen in a short video we have in the History Center, there were speeches, awards, dancing, refreshments, and a great deal of excitement."

Library Manager Rita Carrasco announced that, for a short time only, a table display containing old scrapbooks with newspaper clippings and other historic memorabilia would be available to anyone interested in exploring the library's history through media from back-in-the-day.

A balloon artist crafted a variety of shapes for the kids, and a giant birthday card was available for well-wishers to sign.

No birthday is complete without a cake, so Friends President Sally Whittaker invited the guests to partake of snacks and not one, but three birthday cakes. Mayor Teresa Onoda encouraged the kids to help blow out the candles before everyone enjoyed a slice as the party continued.

Another family-friendly event, the Town of Moraga's 50th anniversary celebration parade, will take place on Saturday, Sept. 28 from 10 to 11 a.m. in the area around School Street and Country Club Drive and Moraga Way. The annual Pear Festival, with a focus on the town's 50th, will begin at 11 a.m. at the Moraga Commons Park.

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