

The JOY Foundation project report

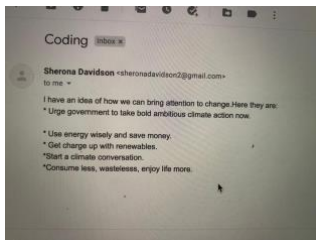
The JOY Foundation Summer Program ran for two weeks from August 9th to August 20th. It took place online via zoom. It was held for thirteen girls between the ages of 14 and 17 who lived at the Homestead place of safety. It occurred each day for four hours from 9am to 1pm. Each day the girls had one hour of math, one hour of English and two hours of coding. There were five volunteers for both math and English. The girls were therefore split into 5 groups of either two or three which allowed for more individual attention. The girls each took a diagnostic test on the Saturday prior to the start of the Camp. This was sent to each of their respective tutors and allowed for lessons to be tailored to their weaknesses. In math, the general focus was homing in on each girls' weaknesses and allowing her to become more comfortable with what she was covering in school. In English, the weaknesses of each girl were also worked on. In addition to this, everyone was taught some useful skills for future employability. In the first week the girls were taught how to write a business letter, with each of them being required to submit one by the end of the summer program. In the second week they were also taught how to write a Curriculum Vitae. In programming, the python 3 language was introduced. The Codecademy software was the main means of instruction as it allowed the girls to do individual work and explore on their own. PowerPoints were also created with the material and shared with the participants in a class setting. The camp had a STEM focus, and thus there were various talks aiming to enlighten the girls on the various aspects of STEM. There was a talk given on climate change and the Caribbean given on the Wednesday of the first week. There was also talks from two different women with careers in STEM on each Friday. In addition to this there were also talks preparing them for leaving the secondary educational system. There was a talk on applying to UWC, universities in Jamaica and abroad as well as how to earn scholarships. The two weeks ended with a period for the girls to give their feedback and also retake the diagnostic test to see how they had improved. Each of the girls reported improvements in both Mathematics and English. They were all given reports by their teachers which showed significant improvement. Each girl also learnt the basics of python 3. Most of them did not know what STEM was at the beginning, or what programming was but they are all now well verse in this concept. Each of the girls was introduced to many new career opportunities in STEM and were able to hear from black women like them who succeeded. A website was created with information on the camp and is currently being updated to include all the power points and talks. The project was only completed this winter break as we returned to give Christmas gifts and prizes to the girls who had participated.

- How you think you made a difference

We taught students who did not know what coding was, the basics of python, this sets them up for strategic advantages in their future. We equipped the girls with useful skills that will aid them after leaving high school such as writing a business letter and CV. We exposed the girls to powerful black women, leading the world of STEM.

- What you have achieved

At the end of the project each girl was able to write both a business letter and a CV. At the beginning of the camp none of them knew what a resume was. Their math levels all improved. Through targeting their weaknesses, we were able to see their performances on the diagnostic test improve. By the end of the camp each girl had been introduced to almost 20 new career options. This gives them the opportunity to pursue different opportunities for themselves. We also spoke to them about climate change and invited them to think about solutions. I received this email from one of my students afterwards:



I was able to create relationships with these girls that have lasted even until now.

What you are proud of

I am proud of how my team was able to adapt. We had planned for the camp to be for one month in July. However, the CXC CSEC and CAPE examinations were pushed back to the month of July. Due to the fact that some of the students would be taking these exams the camp had to be pushed to August and cut short to two weeks to allow both the students and teachers time to prepare to return to school. I am proud that the camp happened and was a relative success. I am proud of how incredibly hard both my team and the students worked

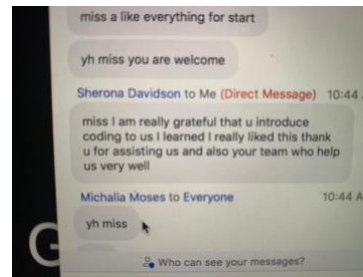
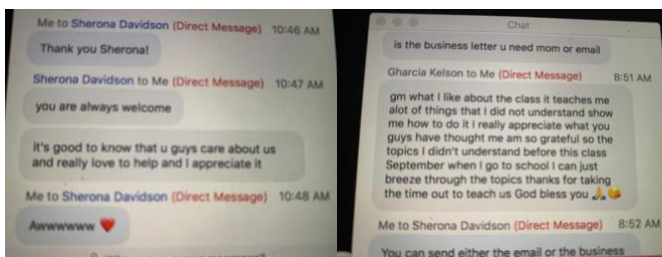
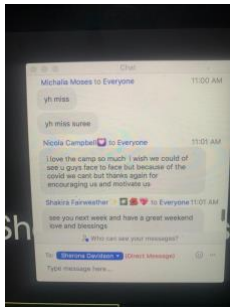
- What the enduring successes of the project have been

The girls have returned to school and are performing better. The project continued this December when I returned to the home to donate Christmas presents to the girls who participated. The JOY Foundation and the Homestead Place of Safety are creating a long-term relationship and we have been invited to conduct the camp again next summer. This means that the camp will not only impact the thirteen girls who participated but will have benefits for potentially dozens if not hundreds of girls as we expand. We are creating awareness about the lack of quality STEM education in Jamaica. We are also expanding our offerings. Through partnering with STEAM Bloom, we are offering an introductory AI session this month.

- How the project made a difference to the people you were aiming to help, what impact has it had on them

Although we definitely impacted them academically, I think more than anything we impacted them emotionally. We aimed to make these girls who come from extremely tough

backgrounds feel loved and cared for. We wanted to encourage them and show them that anything was possible for them. I believe we achieved this based on the feedback we received from the girls:



- How the project has made a difference to you and the project team.

We realized how much work it really takes to plan and execute a project of this nature. I became more organized and also learned how to deal with bureaucracy in detail. Teaching students with a weak educational background was difficult and my team and I often had to change our strategies when it came to teaching. We also learnt how to keep students engaged. For two weeks we truly got to make a difference!

- Where the money was spent

The money was spent on buying school supplies: a book, pencil and pen for each of the girls

Paying for their yearlong subscription to Codecademy

Paying for Zoom

Buying a WIFI router for the home

Buying them Christmas gifts and prizes for their amazing performance during the camp!

- What lessons you have learned from the project

I learnt that things don't always go as planned but that is ok! I learned that perseverance and the ability to adapt are important. I felt a love for these girls that I honestly had never experienced before.

- What you would do differently if you ran the project again

I am planning on doing this project again this summer. The main kinks were in the technology and the poor WIFI connection. Hopefully this summer we will be able to conduct the camp in person, but if not, I will ensure to do a complete run through of a practice day to ensure that the bandwidth at the home can withstand the daily activities for each girl.