GIRLS that CODE in

COOPER CITY, FL - – Girls are discovering something new with the use of the technology of smart phones and tablets. In a previous article on a program called Technovation it was shared that there is an annual competition worldwide that encourages girls to learn how to code apps. This is a follow up story to girls that code and in particular girls that code in Florida. I reached out to the governing body of Technovation to be sure that I understood all of the rules of the competition and how many participants are local to Florida. I got the list back of the following cities:

- Altamonte Springs
- Coconut Creek
- Cooper City
- Fort Lauderdale
- Gainesville
- Lauderhill
- Miami
- Miramar
- Pembroke Pines
- Sunrise
- Winter Park

From the eleven cities nine of them representing South Florida with eight representing Broward County. The Events and Marketing Coordinator reached out to the Florida coaches to connect me to find out more about the girls who code in South Florida. Rosa Jennings along with Co-Coach Binita Moncor from Renaissance Charter School in Cooper City responded to the invitation.

The school had four teams of girls that decided to take the challenge from Technovation. Most of the teams were six graders with one team representing the eighth grade. Exactly what is the challenge?

The girls were required to develop a full functioning app, create a business plan and deliver a pitch to participate in the competition.

"Technovation is the global technology entrepreneurship program for girls. Participants work with professional mentors to research, design, build, and launch mobile apps that solve real problems in their communities over the course of three months. It is free to participate and $20k in awards is distributed to two winning teams at the end of each season."

I promised the teams not to share what problem they are solving with the public because they are still working on their solutions. I can share general ideas that they were focused on health, school life and discipline. This was the first time that the girls and the school had participating in coding and the Technovation challenge.

This is what the teams shared with me in their experience with creating apps. They all had a passion in creating their apps, the subject matter was deep in what they cared about to solve a community issue. Over 80% of them would code again and the experience definitely helped them solidify their aspirations and career goals.

They shared that they discovered something new and they went deeper in to subjects that had some knowledge but needed more to make their app usable.

Their challenges were learning how to code in an app language and get the app to work on the device. They chose to code in MIT App Inventor, one student says it is the , "Real Deal" of app sources. They were all on this journey together to take their passions and create a way for the world to see a solution to the problem.

The students are not allowed to have devices while they are in school so they were dependent on donated items to do their testing. They also found out that they would need a ware to store the data that would be required for their apps to work.

The teams were not short of creative minds; they had a couple of students focusing on Graphic Design and one student found that she enjoyed being behind the lens of the video camera when they were prepar-

They also learned how to do research to broaden their knowledge. They researched who were their competitors in the Apple App & Google Play stores. Their ideas on business have changed since being exposed to creating a business plan and pitching their app as a viable idea. I asked them when they look at apps on their devices now do they think about how the app was created? They all acknowledged that it is something that they do. One of the team members thought about another app concept during the process and plans to further develop her idea to help others.

My last question to them was, If you had a magic wand what would you use it for? They all had answers that every adult coder would want to answer. They shared that the would want to fix all of the bugs, have a place to store the data, make transfers to the devices easier.

They did not move into the next round of the competition. One of the girls shared with me that it was okay with her because it was not about the competition, it was about discovering something new. A couple of them aspire to be kid-entrepreneurs and continue to make their apps work and eventually put it in the App stores for purchase. The coaches Jennings and Moncor will definatley continue with supporting teams at thier school next year.

For more information on Technovation visit http://www.technovationchallenge.org

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Artists of all ages have a message to share in helping eradicate this epidemic that is affecting our community.

Broward County has the second highest new infection rates of HIV in the state of Florida.

ART ON AIDS/HIV

From the Broward County Dept. of Health

United States	Florida
CDC estimates a total of 933,941 persons living with a diagnosis of HIV infection through 2013	A total of 109,969 persons are living with a diagnosis of HIV Infection in Florida through 2014
Blacks accounted for:	**Blacks accounted for:**
43% (n=398,645) of total	47% (n=51,496) of total
37% of adult men and 61% of adult women	38% of adult men and 68% of adult women
65% of pediatric cases	79% of the pediatric cases
31% of MSM (men who have sex with men)	27% of MSM (men who have sex with men)
52% of IDU (Injection Drug User)	52% of IDU (Injection Drug User)
64% of heterosexuals	72% of heterosexuals
47% of deaths with HIV infections in 2013	57% of AIDS case deaths in 2014
According to the 2013 US population Estimates, 12% of the US population is black.	According to Florida's 2014 Population Estimates 15% of Florida's population is black

Break the silence:

1. Raise awareness about HIV disease and related risks among blacks;
2. Encourage individuals to be tested for HIV;
3. If you are living with HIV/AIDS, get in to treatment and care;
4. Increase youth involvement in HIV community planning, decision making and HIV prevention programming;
5. Reduce barriers to HIV testing, prevention and care by reducing HIVAIDS stigma; and
6. Disseminate information on the health benefits of condoms and other risk reduction measures.