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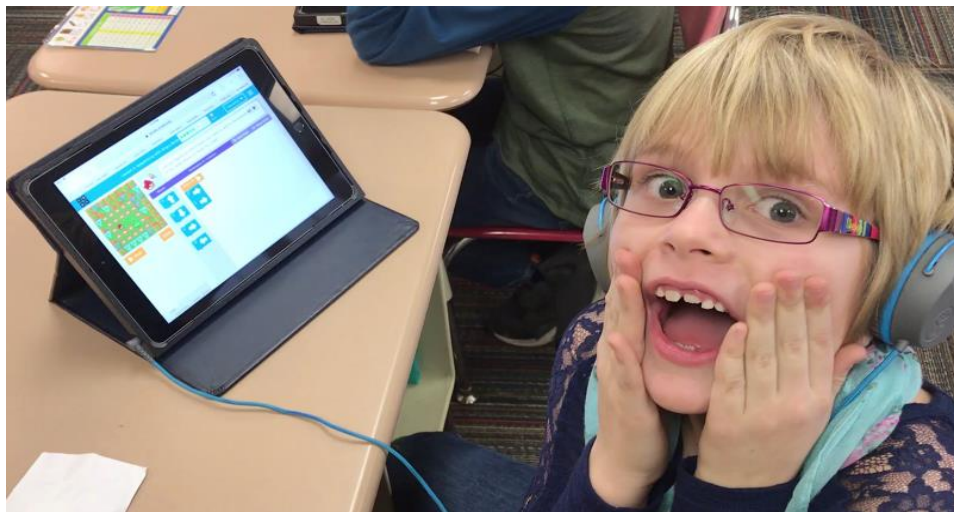
## **LP County Schools Hold First Ever Successful Week of Code**

All La Porte County public schools celebrated the National Week of Code December 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> by conducting coding activities at every grade level from Pre-K to High School Seniors. Nearly 12,000 students, which is almost 70% of all students in La Porte County, participated in some capacity! The Hour of Code started as a worldwide effort designed to introduce students to computer science and demystify "computer coding." For the past three years, talented teachers in each school corporation, have participated in some type of coding experience. This year, for the first time, all La Porte County public school corporations coordinated efforts and resources for cool coding experiences throughout the week. "Coding teaches problem solving, communication & how things work. We want our kids to have an advantage, not be behind when they graduate." stated Maggi Spartz, Unity Foundation president. Unity Foundation, with the help of Professional Volunteer, Linda Wiltfong helped to coordinate the Week of Code as a partner in the La Porte County Skill UP grant.

The La Porte County Public Library helped school corporations by training educators in skills identified in the Indiana Academic Standards. Retired educators and engineers were also trained to provide some of the in-school experiences. The skills associated with coding help students develop academic skills, and build qualities like perseverance, organization, problem solving, and communication. The goal is to help students gain valuable 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and to create a talent pipeline of employees for the county and region. Fonda Owens, LP County Public Library Executive Director states, "We are happy to be advancing the resources for STEM in our County and hope that by providing technology and training for our educators. We can help them meet the new required Indiana Academic Standards. Our local educators are phenomenal, and we enjoy every opportunity to work together to set up our community's children for success."

Mayor Mark Krentz even participated in Week of Code with pre-school students at the La Porte County Public Library. Free coding programs were also available to give students an idea of how coding works were offered by the Library at most of their branches during the Week of Code.

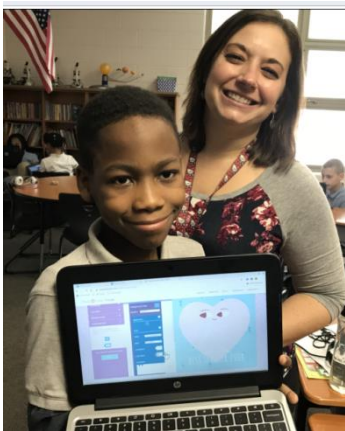
The La Porte County Skill UP Network, a county-wide effort, emerged when Mayor Ron Meer of Michigan City, La Porte Mayor Mark Krentz, with leadership from the Center of Workforce Innovations along with the Northwest Indiana Workforce Board, came together to apply for a Skill UP 3 grant from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. The La Porte County Skill UP Network brings together economic developers, many employers, K-12 education, Purdue Northwest and Ivy Tech, the Unity Foundation, and the La Porte County Public Library to create a talent pipeline, with an initial focus on manufacturers in La Porte County. For more information on the La Porte County Skill UP Network, contact Sandy Alvarez at 219-462-2940 or the Unity Foundation at 219-879-0327.



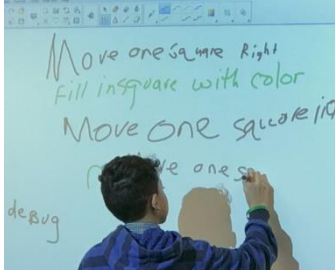
Samantha Hartman of Mrs. Stepniewski's class at Olive Elementary School is amazed by what she coded on her tablet!



Finnley Yagelski, Kindergartener in Miss Cassidy's classroom at South Central Elementary uses a BeeBot to code the story Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See? The classes were collaborating with Jenny Minich and Libraries 360 from La Porte County Library.



James Shannon with teacher Ms. Lozano at Lake Hills Elementary in Michigan City showcases his use of coding to send his teacher a message – it was done using the program mycode.



This student is adding a line of code to the class project in Mrs. Aragon's classroom at Lincoln Elementary School in La Porte. This unplugged coding lesson was taught by local volunteer Diane Szynal, who is a retired LPCSC Principal.