

# CODE NINJAS AT WORK

## Young computer coders learn how to solve 21st-century problems

By Lauren Anderson  
Freeman Staff

BIG BEND — A group of up-and-coming computer coders pepped themselves up for their weekly coding activities Tuesday afternoon, reciting the club's mantra in unison.

"We are Code Ninjas," computer science teacher Jim Ferwerda declared.

"We are problem solvers," the Big Bend Elementary School students, clad in matching white Code Ninjas club T-shirts, responded.

The fifth- and sixth-graders are part of a new Mukwonago Area School District initiative introducing students to the language of computer coding.

Coding is complex, but in its simplest form, Ferwerda said, it is a series of problems that must be solved — hence the club motto. And in a 21st-century digital world, it's an increasingly important skill to have, he said.

About 80 students from the district's elementary schools



Lauren Anderson/Freeman Staff

Computer science teacher Jim Ferwerda helps Big Bend Elementary fifth-graders Peter Spiegel (left) and Liam Hughes (right) during the Code Ninjas afterschool program Tuesday.

have signed up for the new afterschool program, led by four high school teachers.

Students spend five weeks learning the basics of coding, using a beginner-friendly

language called Scratch. By the program's end, they can make their own code creations, such as an animated greeting card, cartoon or game.

"They are learning some of the basic skills of coding and controlling the computer," Ferwerda said. "They are sequencing statements and figuring out what is necessary and what's not, how to rearrange code, how to design a program to be what they want. They are figuring out what are the program's goals and how do I get there? Those are excellent problem solving skills."

### Building interest through excitement

While there are limitations to how much coding students can learn in five one-hour sessions, Ferwerda said, the overarching goal is to capture their interest in computer science.

"There is a level of excitement that we really wanted to try to generate and I think it's been successful," he said. Big Bend Elementary fifth-grader Liam Hughes said he is surprised by how much he has learned through Code Ninjas. Hughes' friend once tried to teach him some coding, but it didn't catch on, he said.

But with Code Ninjas, he said, it's easy and fun because he gets to program animations with Pokemon characters.

Kid-accessible coding Email: landerson@conley.net

activities like this, Ferwerda said, have only become widely accessible recently. The effort to teach students coding has been helped by initiatives like Code.org's Hour of Code, which encourages students and teachers worldwide to try basic coding activities in school on a designated day.

Still, Ferwerda said, it's not too common for schools to integrate coding fully into their curricula.

Coding education advocates say more computer programming and computer science instruction should be offered in schools, with a particular focus on reaching female students and minorities.

The Code Ninjas leaders — two of whom are women — have said teaching coding at a young age helps students realize that anyone is able to code, regardless of demographic trends in the industry.

Ferwerda also noted a growing demand for continuing coding opportunities at the middle school level.

"The excitement is building and we know we do have to do something in middle school to continue," he said. "Nothing is set in stone, but we're open to anything."

The Big Bend Code Ninjas students said they already have an idea in mind for next year's club name: Code Ninjas 2.0.

## Carroll kicks off food drive

WAUKESHA — Carroll University has partnered with Feeding America to kick off the Fifth Annual National Service Project, a month-long food drive seeking to feed 45,000 people.

Through April 30, people can participate — locally and nationally — by taking a bag

of food to their local Feeding America food bank, or to any food pantry, church or other food collection site. Once delivered, they are then asked to report the donation to Carroll University through the online response form at [www.carrollu.edu/alumni/food](http://www.carrollu.edu/alumni/food). Interested volunteers can also sign up for food drive events in their local communities through this form.

Participants can donate meals online and report these donations to the university. A donation of \$1 provides five meals for the hungry; a \$219 donation can feed a person for an entire year.

Doug Hastad, the university's president, says the legacy of service is important to the university's mission. Since the start of the National Service Project, Carroll has helped bring nearly 150,000 meals to hungry people across the nation. Last year, the project gathered 41,679 meals — a 16-percent increase from 2013. The university is the only higher education partner with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin that involves its alumni, nationally, in a food drive. Dating back to 1846, Carroll University is the first four-year higher learning institution in the state; the annual month-long food drive is the largest collaboration between a university and Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin.

Charles McLimans, CEO and president of Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, said projects like the National Service Project are essential in ensuring partnering hunger relief programs have the food necessary to feed those in need. These projects also help raise awareness about hunger in America.

Participants can bring donations to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, 1700 W. Fond Du Lac Avenue, or to any food pantry, church or collection site.

— Emily Topczewski, Special to The Freeman

From The FREEMAN files



## On this day in Waukesha County

### 69 years ago April 2, 1946

Sen. Robert M. LaFollette Jr., Wisconsin, left no doubt where he stands on the Case-labor control bill, in a telegram to the national affairs committee of Waukesha's Association of Commerce, read at Monday night's annual meeting of the group.

The senator is opposed to it. The national affairs committee which favored adoption of the Case bill, had wired Senator LaFollette asking him that he state his views on the measure so they could be made known at the Monday night meeting.

Senator LaFollette said that his committee on education and labor is reporting out a substitute bill to the Case anti-strike proposal, and that it probably will be sent to the senate late Tuesday. He offered to send some copies to the Waukesha committee.

Union leaders have opposed the Case measure because of its restrictive provisions on labor unions, while management has favored the bill because it places responsibility on labor for strikes and work stoppages. President Truman was reported likely to veto the Case bill if it passes.

### 61 years ago April 2, 1954

*Up and Down Broadway And She's Still Writing for US*

Mrs. Louis M. Ward, 416 N. West Ave., is probably one of the Freeman's oldest of veteran readers. A note she sent to the kolm this week emphasizes that point.

"Grandmother Ward" said the Freeman printed her writing more than 60 years ago when she wrote a poem about "Playmates." Now moving into her 90th year, "Grandmother" wrote another poem for us and by jingo we're going to print it. She calls this one the:

"Arrival of Tommie."  
"Came to fill our cup of joy  
Heaven sent this little boy.  
Messages of Angel lore  
Never taught to us before.  
To combat the fear and strife  
Comes to most of us in life.  
Give us knowledge to beware  
Of doubt that God is everywhere.  
Strong in faith nor backward fall  
To observe is best of all."  
We expect to hear more from Grandmother Ward as the years go on. After all, Grandmother Moses made a name for herself with a paintbrush.

— Local history compiled by Patrice Shanks; [pshanks@conley.net](mailto:pshanks@conley.net)

## Also on this date

**April 2, 1865** — Confederate President Jefferson Davis and most of his Cabinet fled the Confederate capital of Richmond, Va., because of advancing Union forces.

**April 2, 1917** — President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war against Germany, saying, "The world must be made safe for democracy." (Congress declared war four days later.)

**April 2, 1932** — Aviator Charles A. Lindbergh and John F. Condon went to a cemetery in The Bronx, New York, where Condon turned over \$50,000 to a man in exchange for Lindbergh's kidnapped son. (The child, who was not returned, was found dead the following month.)

**April 2, 1956** — The soap operas "As the World Turns" and "The Edge of Night" premiered on CBS-TV.

**April 2, 1982** — Several thousand troops from Argentina seized the disputed Falkland Islands, located in the south Atlantic, from Britain. (Britain seized the islands back the following June.)

**April 2, 1986** — Four American passengers were killed when a bomb exploded aboard a TWA jetliner en route from Rome to Athens, Greece.

**April 2, 2005** — Pope John Paul II, who'd helped topple communism in Europe and left a deeply conservative stamp on the church that he'd led for 26 years, died in his Vatican apartment at age 84.

## Flavor of the day

Today and Friday

**Bubba's**, 1276 Capitol Drive, Pewaukee  
Today: Mocha Chip  
Friday: Cookies 'n Cream

**Culver's**, 1650 E. Main St., Waukesha  
Today: Bonfire S'mores  
Friday: Turtle

**Culver's**, 840 W. Sunset Drive, Waukesha  
Today: Double Marshmallow Oreo  
Friday: Mint Chip



**Culver's**, 2600 N. Grandview Blvd., Waukesha  
Today: Mint Brownie  
Friday: Rocky Road

**Culver's**, 14855 W. National Ave., New Berlin  
Today: Chocolate Covered Strawberry  
Friday: Double Marshmallow Oreo

**Culver's**, 3705 N. 124th St., Brookfield  
Today: Caramel Fudge Cookie Dough  
Friday: Salted Double Caramel Pecan

**Culver's**, 21300 W. Capitol Drive, Town of Brookfield  
Today: Mint Oreo  
Friday: Turtle

**Culver's**, 15280 W. Bluemound Road, Elm Grove  
Today: Double Marshmallow Oreo  
Friday: Turtle

**Culver's**, 701 Industrial Ct., Hartland  
Today: Mint Oreo  
Friday: Bonfire S'mores

**Culver's**, 1090 N. Rochester St., Mukwonago  
Today: Salted Double Caramel Pecan  
Friday: Caramel Fudge Cookie Dough

**Culver's**, W187-S7959 Racine Ave., Muskego  
Today: Red Raspberry  
Friday: Caramel Turtle

**Culver's**, 1177 E. Summit Ave., Oconomowoc  
Today: Really Reese's  
Friday: Double Strawberry

**Culver's**, W249-N6620 Highway 164, Town of Lisbon  
Today: Really Reese's  
Friday: Chocolate Covered Strawberry

**Culver's**, 400 E. Summit Ave., Wales  
Today: Bonfire S'mores  
Friday: Caramel Turtle

**Sloppy Joe's**, 280 W. Broadway, Waukesha  
Today: Chocolate Peanut Butter  
Friday: Maple Nut

**Kopp's Frozen Custard**, 18880 W. Bluemound Road, Town of Brookfield  
Today: Chocolate Thunder, Double Truffle  
Friday: Peppermint Patty, Turtle Sundae

**LeDuc's Frozen Custard Drive-In**, 240 W. Summit Ave., Wales  
Today: Heathbar  
Friday: Mocha Flake

**Oscar's Frozen Custard**, 21165 Highway 18, Town of Brookfield  
Today: unavailable  
Friday: unavailable

## Lottery

Wednesday, April 1  
WISCONSIN

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Pick 4	2-4-3-6
Megabucks	12-17-23-30-43-47
SuperCash	6-7-12-17-22-23
SuperCash Doubler:	No
Powerball	2-30-33-39-44
Powerball	1
Power Play	3
Badger 5	3-11-17-21-31

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