

My NSF APNA Experience

By: Kristina Mullukatte

I am a 10th grade student attending Olympia High School in Olympia, Washington. I have always been interested in Computer Science, and when I get older I would like to become a Computer Science Engineer. For these reasons, I decided to teach Computer Science and Math to the students at Thayamma Mallaiah School, Maddur.

I visit India every four years for about a month and I usually have a lot of fun visiting my cousins. But this year was a little different thanks to the NSF APNA program. It will be a little more exciting.

It was always clear that the fairest hand in life had not been given to these children. Growing up in such an environment they will never have the opportunities in America we enjoy. But they never let this aspect define them. It has been a great opportunity for me to connect



with students, to obtain first-hand understanding of schools and children in a different part of the world. When I was initially given the opportunity to teach and administer a Math and Computer Science workshop during my summer trip to India, I was unsure of what to expect from the students, like how would I be able to teach these children when I could not speak in Kannada as well, and would I be able to interact effectively with them?

Being so excited for this new opportunity, I spent my next few weeks learning math and computer science content for the workshop. Workshop preparation was, by far, the hardest, most time-consuming and the most effort needed. I wanted to make this experience not only worthwhile for me, but also to the students. I used MIT app inventor to teach the computer science part of the workshop. We created a very simple ball bounce game which is an animation game in App Inventor by making a Ball (a sprite) bounce around on the screen. For the math part of the workshop, I decided to use simple math word problems to solve. I participated in various math competitions in high school including Math League and AMC and I won first place individually, which showed me that these critical thinking problems were not only fun but challenging. BUT the whole time I was there wasn't spent on only teaching. I also used to show them where my house was located back in America also during some school time. We would spend parts of the day by letting the students ask me what I ate for breakfast, lunch and dinner and how my day would be like in America. I used to show

them my friends and family in America and they were all really fascinated and just wished for a bright future.

Without the support of many people, this workshop would not have been possible, so I would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who helped make this possible particularly for my mom and grandparents. The entire experience was really rewarding because I would usually never volunteer to do extra work on a vacation, but I found something when I was teaching and that becoming a teacher only makes it more rewarding when you see the kids doing their hardest and shocking you with things you never expected to hear about. Seeing the happiness in the faces of the student every morning when I come in is something that I will always remember. This experience has been a wonderful journey and I am so happy to be a part of it.

