

Finding Her Voice in the World of Computing:

📅 Posted by Samina Mondal and Angela Cleveland on Sep 05, 2019



Growing up in a household where Java was the second language, I knew I liked computers and technology. Before pursuing a career in IT, I knew I liked computers and technology. However, I needed STEM outreach, and teaching cybersecurity to elementary school students. Enter an opportunity to take part in the 10th Congressional Young Women's Leadership Program, a chance to share stories of women in the fields of computing and education. Inspired by meeting a VP of Amazon Web Services, I was driven to use technology to create a positive environment and motivation to establish my high school's first [Girls Who Code](#) club (and one of the first in the region) to take action to close the gender gap in CS. My responsibilities as president of the Student Ambassador for the regional branch has not only further developed my skills but also helped me grow into an assertive leader. Working alongside CS and STEM educators in a supportive atmosphere for girls to embrace their love of computing without any judgment.

Full Story

Growing up in a household where Java was the second language, I have always had a passion for pursuing a career in IT, I knew I liked computers and technology. However, I needed STEM outreach, and teaching cybersecurity to elementary school students. Enter an opportunity to take part in the 10th Congressional Young Women's Leadership Program, a chance to share stories of women in the fields of computing and education. Inspired by meeting a VP of Amazon Web Services, I was driven to use technology to create a positive environment and motivation to establish my high school's first [Girls Who Code](#) club (and one of the first in the region) to take action to close the gender gap in CS. My responsibilities as president of the Student Ambassador for the regional branch has not only further developed my skills but also helped me grow into an assertive leader. Working alongside CS and STEM educators in a supportive atmosphere for girls to embrace their love of computing without any judgment.



Along the way, I was introduced to an incredible non-profit organization, National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT). I was amazed to meet so many (and their male allies) across the U.S. who are passionate about technology. I was ecstatic when I got the notification that I was chosen as a [Virginia Affiliate Award Winner](#)! I represented Northern Virginia, where I met many inspirational women. Countless university students, professors, and CEOs attended to provide countless opportunities NCWIT was able to create for young women.

This award not only provided me with the opportunity to represent my peers but also allowed me to develop confidence as a leader. It inspired me to continue to work toward a career in technology. I wanted to increase my involvement in NCWIT. I got the opportunity to serve as a

designed to teach K-12 girls programming fundamentals and computational thinking. The goal is to create an inclusive space for girls to explore how their interests in computing.

In May 2019, I hosted a Cyber Week event at my former elementary school, Forest Hill. I was joined by third-grade teacher Jeffrey LeLoup. Seeing one of my favorite educators after I developed my first memories of using technology in his classroom as a child. No wonder! His lessons relating to specific cybersecurity topics for each day of the week, from strong passwords to more nuanced behavior like recognizing phishing messages. Teaching them how to be safe and conscious consumers, creators, and citizens. I taught them to stop cyber threats before they could happen.

As for next steps, I look forward to expanding the Cyber Week curriculum through my initiative. I'm thrilled to advocate for broadening participation in computing to more females through cybersecurity education through my initiative. This year, I plan to focus on middle school classrooms. Themes will include cybersafety, cyberbullying, and making connections to career opportunities.

Thanks to the wonderful funding provided by NCWIT [AspireIT](#), I have this opportunity to reach out, give back to the community, and honor the teachers who have shaped me. I want to show all young women like me that regardless of their age, race, or economic status, they can pursue their passions alongside a cohort of supportive females and educators by

Are you a high school CS teacher, counselor, or another educator? Provide your feedback. Samina had to find her community by nominating students for the [Award for Aspirations in Computing](#) award close on Nov. 5, 2019. You can also look on the website to find your local technical questions. The goal is to provide students with the community of support in computing. The brief questions are about what sparked their interest, how CS faculty provide leadership, etc. Many school counselors run "lunch bunches" so the young women can meet during school time.

Get started today! Share the [Award for Aspirations in Computing](#) with your female friends.

About the Authors

Samina Mondal is a college freshman from the DC area pursuing a BS in Information Systems as a Public Affairs intern at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory, combining medical and STEM education outreach. Throughout her high school career, Samina has passed on her love for girls in technology by starting her school's first Girls Who Code club, acting as a mentor, and serving as an AspireIT student leader. Additionally, Samina is the founder of the curriculum of cybersecurity principles to be freely distributed to schools and implementing Cyber Week across the DC metropolitan area, equipping students with skills as well as educating them on the opportunities for a future career in technology. Cyber Week 2019, a week of cyber events in schools across the DMV area promoted from October 22, 2019 to June 14, 2020. For more information or how to get involved, visit www.cyberweek.io, coming very soon!

Angela Cleveland is the Program Director for [NCWIT Counselors for Computing](#) (NCCF) providing school counselors with information and resources they can use to support ALL students.

education and careers. She has 15 years of experience as a school counselor and Counselor of the Year" award. She is an Executive Board Member and Webmaster fo (NJSCA).

More information

- [Aspirations in Computing](#)
- [National Center for Women & Information Technology \(NCWIT\)](#)
- [Counselors for Computing](#)
- [Palo Alto Network Cyber A.C.E.S. \(Activities in Cybersecurity Education for](#)

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