

Girl Code

By Roshini Rangarajan

"Class dismissed," announced Mr. Dobbins as the bell rang at the end of the school day. Shruti leaped up in joy. She ran and quickly stuffed her textbooks in her book bag and headed to room 402. As she entered the classroom, she was greeted by Mr. Hunter, the computer teacher.

"Hello, everyone. Happy Melbrook Middle School Club Day and welcome to the coding club." Mr. Hunter introduced with a smile.

"This year we are going to be learning 5 different computer languages. However, before jumping into the fun, let's do an icebreaker game! Partner up everyone," Mr. Hunter chided as the students got up to find a partner. To Shruti's dismay, there were no girls in the room to partner up with and all the boys in the room found someone to be partners with. Already frustrated enough, she had to play the icebreaker game with the teacher. Afterward, feeling disappointed in not having a partner, Shruti headed to her Bharathanatyam class, which is a form of traditional Indian dance. While doing the dance routine with her dance mates, her teacher mentioned that if she was going to do a three beat step she would need to add in a finishing step. Taking that into mind, she practiced. Then, a thought hit Shruti. The dance routine was just like coding.

Remembering what her dance teacher told her she realized that what her teacher said was like an "if -else" statement, which is usually found in JavaScript, a computer language, in the coding world.

After dance class, Shruti thought, "Hmmm...Why can't I take this idea of coding and combine it with things girls like to do. I can make more girls interested in coding." With this thought, Shruti made it a reality. She taped up posters, announced the new club on the broadcasting system, and even handed out flyers in her free time. Without a doubt, tons of girls in Melbrook Middle school joined the club, it was called Floral Coding. Surprisingly, there was even a waiting list for the class. Shruti taught all the classes herself, teaching girls the fundamentals of coding by using analogies to relate to them and they had fun projects like animating a Bharathanatyam dancer or any dancer of their choice. At the end of a couple of weeks, they created a club website and a campaign to promote science, technology, engineering, and math which is also known as STEM to as many girls as possible. Soon enough, all of the girls' favorite language was HTML.