

Code Central

Media kit

ABOUT CODE CENTRAL

The first of its kind in Nevada, Code Central was established in March 2017 by brothers Eric and Brian Mendelsohn as an after-school tech center for youth to learn the fundamentals of programming, app development and computer science. Day-to-day operations are managed by Eric Mendelsohn, who has more than 25 years of experience in teaching and education management.

Located at 10545 S. Eastern Ave., Suite 110, at Horizon Ridge Parkway and Eastern Ave., Code Central teaches students in a fun and collaborative space that inspires creativity — a place where youth can go to learn, grow, have fun, and be around others doing the same thing, with the guidance of experienced instructors. The company's programs focus on enrichment and teaching real-world skills, adding to students' overall education. Code Central combines personalized, self-paced learning with group projects that reveal the possibilities of coding.

“We want them to see what’s possible,” said Eric Mendelsohn. “We don’t just teach coding; through coding, they learn to solve problems, overcome obstacles and develop critical thinking skills and creativity. We want the learning to be valuable, engaging and meaningful.”

Youth ages 7-17 can join Code Central on a month-to-month membership basis of either once a week or twice a week, at the days/times of their choice. Members also receive access to their projects from home, where they can work on them and practice as much as they'd like. Before joining, kids can try the program with a free intro session.

Code Central is open after school through the early evening and on Saturdays, providing flexibility for a fun, educational experience.

THE NEED

The STEM-related economy is growing significantly faster than the nation's economy as a whole, according to “Nevada K-12 STEM Pipeline,” an article by UNLV College of Education instructors David Vallett, Ph.D., assistant professor, and P.G. Schrader, Ph.D., professor. Currently, within Nevada's elementary schools, an average of only 15 percent of classroom time is dedicated to science instruction, the paper reports.

“Too few Nevadans consider STEM careers in large part because they are not exposed to STEM education as students or are not made aware of the many exciting career opportunities in STEM available to those with some postsecondary education,” says the State of Nevada's Advisory Council on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics – STEM in its 2016 Strategic Plan.

Co-founder Brian Mendelsohn likens learning coding to learning a foreign language, which it basically is.

“Just like learning a foreign language, learning to code is much harder as an adult,” he said. “The younger people are exposed to it, the better their chance of grasping it.

CURRICULUM

Code Central’s philosophy focuses around two core elements: First, create an environment that provides hands-on learning. Second, offer a curriculum that engages student interest, curiosity, and imagination. The company understands that kids learn and grow in different ways and that one size does not fit all.

Code Central introduces kids to a wide variety of languages, including Blockly, JavaScript, and HTML/CSS. Students will be shown how to apply their language skills to projects such as game development, web design and robotics. Robotics are shown through the Dash & Dot kit, Lego Mindstorms, and Arduinos. The company continually develops its curriculum to add additional learning opportunities in various languages.

Some of the technologies Code Central uses for beginners and advanced coders include:

Code.org

Code.org, utilizing block code to introduce the beginning concepts of coding such as logical thinking, decision making, repetition, and interactive programs.

Code Combat

Code Combat is a platform for students to learn computer science while playing through a video game. From beginner to advanced levels, they learn to write code in JavaScript and HTML/CSS in an engaging game format.

Advanced Sprints

Code Central’s Sprints provide the setting for kids to apply their knowledge in a project-based environment. Code Central believes in kids creating together and has designed its Advanced Sprints with this in mind. The Sprints introduce group projects focused on unique technologies that require students to collaborate together. With new innovations happening daily, Code Central constantly works to offer its students the opportunity to experiment with the latest in technology.

Advanced Sprints include: Game Development, App Development, Web Design, Arduino, Lego Mindstorms, and more.

LEADERSHIP

Eric Mendelsohn

Co-Founder/Director

As co-founder/director of Henderson, Nevada-based Code Central, Eric Mendelsohn oversees the inner workings of the after-school tech center for youth. With more than 25 years of experience in education and management, Mendelsohn has worked with a wide range of students from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds.

Currently, he is serving on the State Board of Education's writing team for Nevada's K-12 Computer Science Standards – a 27-person team headed by Code Central's Cindi Chang. Slated for rollout in the 2019-20 school year, the standards will create consistency through all Nevada K-12 schools for Computer Science classes.

Holding a master's degree in English and armed with extensive program development experience and 20 years of teaching, he has developed countless courses in many areas of study. He has created several cultural training, tutoring, mentoring and learning programs. He greatly enjoys creating spaces that inspire others to learn and is the father of a second grade "creator."

Brian Mendelsohn

Co-Founder

An entrepreneur with a passion for empowering youth and adults to unleash their potential, Brian Mendelsohn is the mastermind behind the idea that has matured into what is now Code Central. He has worked diligently to gather experts and educators of their respective fields to bring life to Code Central's vision of "Kids Creating Together."

A family man, promoter of healthy living, and ongoing philanthropist, Mendelsohn has brought with him a unique background of education and philosophy to develop the core structures upon which Code Central has been built. In his spare time, he can be found on the field coaching high school football or spearheading his latest venture of helping others create "games worth playing."

Cindi Chang

Curriculum Specialist

Cindi Chang serves as Code Central's curriculum specialist. She is the Nevada Department of Education Standards and Instructional Support specialist for computer science and STEM programs. Previously, she was a computer science instructor at Southwest Career & Technical Academy and an adjunct professor at Touro University Nevada. She is also a trainer/facilitator for Code.org, where she works with K-12 CCSD educators, and assists state, national and government agencies to promote computer science education for all ages.

Chang received the 2012 Nevada State Career & Technical Education Teacher of the Year award. Holding a master's degree in education as well as a bachelor's in computer information science and another in business management, Chang shows just exactly what it means to be "girlie geek."

She is the mother of six children and, in her spare time, enjoys reading and traveling.

Claire Shorral

Instructional Specialist

Claire Shorral is a manager in computer science for the Oakland Unified School District, where she provides input with computer science curriculums. With two bachelor's degrees from Rice University, and as a teacher and instructional coach at Castlemont High School in the Bay area, Shorral is fully submersed in education and computer science.

As the creator of Teachers Teach Computer Science, a website that assists with tools and assets for teachers to bring computer science in their classroom, Shorral loves and cares for her students and the security of their future.

Q&A WITH CO-FOUNDER ERIC MENDELSON

Q: Programming is often solitary. What are the benefits of going somewhere for it?

A: An after-school tech center like ours offers a social environment where students can interact with other students to discuss ideas and concepts, to work together in learning and creating projects. We also have instructors who work with the students to explain concepts, track their progress, keep them focused, and help them to overcome obstacles and develop problem-solving skills. Additionally, we incorporate collaborative projects into our curriculum. As most programming jobs include working with others on projects, the kids learn teamwork, collaboration, working with different personalities and more.

Q: Code Combat sounds dangerous. What's that about?

A: Code Combat is a learning software designed for younger students to learn coding. It has the look and feel of a video game, so it's engaging for students, but they're actually learning how to write code in JavaScript and HTML. Once they learn a language, they can more easily pick up on other languages. In addition to learning specific programming languages, our students are learning to think computationally and solve problems.

Q: What benefits, other than the obvious, are there to learning to program?

A: There are many additional benefits, including development of their critical thinking, problem solving, math, writing, typing and even their language development skills. They also learn how to think like a programmer, which includes overcoming obstacles, figuring out bugs, dealing with frustration and not giving up on projects.

Q: Is it important for everyone to know some coding? Or will it be?

A: As technology evolves, it's becoming more and more important for people to understand coding. Even if you're not coding yourself, chances are there's some component of your job where there is a need to understand coding.

In fact, according to a June 2016 [report](#) by Burning Glass Technologies, "Beyond Point And Click: The Expanding Demand For Coding Skills," half of jobs in the top income quartile (greater than \$57,000 per year) are in occupations that commonly require coding skills from job applicants.

Q: Can you talk a little about the importance of robotics in the manufacturing industry?

A: Robotics in the manufacturing industry is very important because a lot of the work in manufacturing is usually repetitive and monotonous. With robotics in manufacturing, we can set robots to function for a long period of time, and the quality of the product would stay the same throughout the production process. This has helped companies decrease the production of defective goods.

Q: How are you supporting Southern Nevada's workforce development efforts to turn out world-class coders?

A: We're exposing kids to programming at an early age, showing them the possibilities – to explore and learn the role that programming plays in technology. We're also giving them the opportunity to learn in a structured and supervised environment, providing the technology and instructors to enable them to learn more effectively.

Additionally, we host an industry speaker series, where a guest speaker working in the industry visits and talks about his or her job and what it involves, what they're doing now, in the future, etc., specifically in Nevada.

Q: To what proficiency can you train a student?

A: Our curriculum goes all the way up to college level computer science. We're unlimited in what we can offer.

Q: How does your instruction compare to that which students learn in school?

A: According to [code.org](#), only 40 percent of Nevada schools teach computer programming. Meanwhile, 90 percent of parents want their children to learn computer science.

Currently, there's no consistency. In some schools, it's taught as an elective. Many schools don't have updated equipment – if they have computers at all. Whereas, at Code Central, we have hardware and software not available in schools, and our instruction is self-paced and provides kids with an active and engaging learning environment, as opposed to a passive learning method.

We also work with a fair amount of special needs students, as our environment is very conducive to them. They can concentrate in ways they never have before; at our facility, there aren't as many distractions, and we can provide more personalized instruction. They work at their own pace and focus on what they're doing. It's fun and engaging. As they learn, it builds their confidence; with more confidence, they enjoy it more. It's a positive influence on their development.

Q: How far into the future are you projecting with your instruction?

A: Our vision is both short- and long-term, and we have the flexibility to bring in any learning tools we think would be appropriate. We are constantly improving our curriculum, and our instructors – college students and recent college grads – have their finger on the pulse of what’s going on in the industry.

As such, we’re constantly looking for the latest technology to incorporate in our instruction and are currently keeping an eye on wearables and virtual reality.

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