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To: ejackson@ashevillenc.gov
Cc:
Subject: [Test] Leadership Changes and Beloved Asheville Update

News, updates, and announcements from Code for Asheville

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Leadership Changes & Beloved Update

Check out the announcement below from the co-captains about some leadership changes and an opportunity to help shape our future. We also have an update from Jim March on the Beloved Asheville computer lab and information about next week's community night.

Leadership Changes and Opportunities: A Note From the Co-Captains

Dear Code for Asheville friends,

First, we have an announcement. Co-captain Jesse Michel, who has helped to lead the brigade for the past couple years, will be leaving his captainâ€™s position and transitioning to a core team-member role. Jesse is looking forward to using his more technical skills towards contributing to the group, and using the knowledge acquired as captain to support the new leadership. With this change, we are looking for new leadership to step in and help shape the Code for Asheville organization. As part of this transition, we want to take some time to reflect on who we are and to rethink how we want to operate â€“ evaluating what works, and what could be improved.

We feel like Code for Asheville is at a crossroads.

On the one hand, we are extremely proud of the work weâ€™ve done over the years. Code for Asheville has frequently appeared in local and national press. More

importantly, we have made and are making a positive difference in our community. Our members are responsible for getting an open data policy passed by City Council, for helping to support data-driven discussions about issues vital to our community, for building resources to help local citizens who are homeless as well as those who are reentering the community after incarceration, and for one of the first open budget sites in NC. And we believe that we are only getting started.

At the same time, we face a couple key challenges. First, the Code for Asheville community and especially its core team and leadership need to better reflect the diversity of our community. We firmly believe that our ability to serve the community effectively depends on this. Second, we have not yet unlocked the secret of broadening participation. Too many projects find themselves dependent on ongoing â€œheroicâ€ efforts by one or two people rather than unlocking a variety of ways for people to contribute at a range of commitment levels.

We suspect these challenges are related, that building a leadership team which better reflects our community may require a different participation model, one that provides ways for people to engage gradually and that offers opportunities for a range of talents, not just technical ones.

We need your help to explore new ways forward. We especially need your participation in the conversation. Come join in the discussion at our next meetup, or offer your thoughts in our Facebook group, on Slack, or on Twitter. In addition, weâ€™ll be reaching out to you individually to hear your perspectives.

We donâ€™t know exactly how this will go, but we are looking forward to writing the next chapter of Code for Asheville together.

Eric & Jesse

Update on the Beloved Asheville computer lab

By Jim March

I have stepped into the breach, and patience is a virtue. My first couple visits to the Beloved Asheville computer lab for the homeless reminds me how a project can seem overwhelmingly complex and confusing in the beginning. So I take a deep breath, inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale.

First order of business is getting acquainted: with the vision and dreams of Reverend Amy Cantrell and her volunteer staff, with the wants and needs of the visitors coming and going, and with the resources at hand in the computer lab.

I had an inspiring conversation with Reverend Cantrell, who looks to a day when there is a community computer lab, dedicated to serving those who do not have access to the Internet through means of their own. The vision is of a place where there is enough room for enough computers to meet the wants and needs of the homeless community, at a price that is affordable to all.

I also began a conversation with the volunteer staff, who talked about support for their work, too, whether editing photographs, producing videos, supporting micro-businesses, preparing proposals, or connecting with the community through social media.

And every journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step ...

Though I am not certain how I might help with some of these longer-term goals, I do know how to check to see if a computer is working. So my first order of business was to turn on all the systems (ranging from Apple Macs to PC desktops and portables running a variety of Microsoft operating systems). My check list included:

- Can I get to the Internet?
- Can I print a web page?
- Are the operating systems up-to-date (particularly in view of the latest WannaCry ransomware virus attacks)?

Questions I have for next week's visit:

- What security should there be on the computers?
- Should there be access control (limiting users to certain use and access privileges)?

- How many operating systems can we support?
- What about Linux (particularly Mint or Ubuntu or ???)?

No, actually, my questions need to be how the computer lab can help solve the challenges faced by the homeless. Because without direction, even a million steps might not get me to my destination!

All-in-all, there's lots of work (and fun!) to be had. And lots more conversations. If you'd like to join me, let me know: jimcmarch@yahoo.com, or the Code for Asheville Slack channel, or our Meet-Up.

Upcoming events

Monthly Community Meetup
Our next monthly community meetup will be at 5:30pm on June 8th at the Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. Southside Center. We will be joined by Kathryn Bradley, a teacher of engineering design, computer science, and robotics to 7th and 8th graders at Clyde A Erwin Middle School.

Kathryn will be demonstrating the app inventor development platform that she uses to teach basic concepts in computer science. Using drag and drop blocks and components, students can build an app quickly and easily and test it out on an android tablet immediately. Once the students understand the way the platform works, they build loops, functions, and conditions to complete several assigned apps. Kathryn teach graphics and sound editing and at the end of the class, students turn in a final project app that they design and build from scratch.

After the presentation and Q&A weâ€™ll discuss opportunities for projects that impact education and ways to engage local students in civic hacking.

RSVP on Meetup.

Monthly Planning Meetup
Our next brigade planning meeting is on Tuesday, June 20, 5:30pm at the Battery Park Book Exchange. RSVP here.

About Asheville's Government
Asheville's government shapes the lives of everyone in the city, but can be dauntingly opaque to locals looking to get involved. Drawing from over a decade of experience covering City Hall, local reporter David Forbes of the Asheville Blade held 3 sessions About Asheville's Government, how it works and how to get involved. he sessions are over, but check out the video and materials here. ***Highly recommended***.

Help wanted

We have a bunch of new opportunities coming out of the last Community Night and our recent planning conversations. They include:

- Help end homelessness by helping the Homeless Coalition and the Homeless Initiative Advisory Committee identify and set up better collaboration and communication tools.
- Improve the Code for Asheville website by bringing fresh eyes and ideas.
- Contribute to this semi-weekly newsletter by taking or sharing responsibility for one or more sections.
- Join Code for NC's effort to build a statewide reentry resources website along the lines of the Buncombe County Reentry Resources Hub.

Get more details on our Help Wanted page and email us at code4asheville@gmail.com if you are interested.

Join the CfA Discussion on Slack

(It may take a moment for the form to load)

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