

For Immediate Release
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Media Release

Charleston Promise Neighborhood partners with Blackbaud to offer "Camp Blackbaud"



James Simons Montessori School

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CHARLESTON, SC - On Tuesday November 17, 2020, eight students from James Simons Montessori School had the opportunity to participate in the annual Camp Blackbaud, along with students from Chicora and Sanders-Clyde. The camp is a STEM-based camp designed for 5th graders to engage in hands-on learning projects and to educate them about careers in STEM fields.

This was a project that was founded as a partnership between Blackbaud and Charleston Promise Neighborhood. Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2020, Charleston Promise Neighborhood (CPN) was founded by Charleston County, the cities of Charleston and North Charleston, and the Charleston County School District (CCSD). CPN's intent is to transform a 5.6 square mile area known as "The Neck," which has been lagging behind in economic, educational and social indicators for over 25 years. CPN's mission is to provide and facilitate comprehensive programs and services that support children, strengthen families, and mobilize residents to action.

Attending Camp Blackbaud has been an honor that James Simons (and other Charleston Promise Neighborhood schools including Sanders Clyde and Chicora) have enjoyed for many years. This year, however, like most things in the 2020-2021 school year, the camp looked a lot different. Instead of the students physically going to Blackbaud Headquarters on Daniel Island, Blackbaud brought the experience to them in a Covid-friendly environment.

Students received individually wrapped kits from [Camp Invention](#), the teaching arm of the [National Inventors Hall of Fame](#) whose mission is to connect the inventors who built the world around us with the innovators of tomorrow while promoting creativity and advancing the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship. Students and coaches were provided with instructions about how to construct a sports stadium or arena. Each kit had a set of cards to introduce inventors to the students and help them imagine the tools needed to be successful in their construction. They were able to blend science and fun while creating their unique vision and were encouraged to think big, leading to several students creating entirely new game and design concepts. Not only were the

packages very comprehensive, but the students also had access to Blackbaud coaches, CCSD teachers and CPN mentors who joined via Zoom to coach them every step of the way.

Principal Christine Ryan of James Simons reflected on the experience, "I appreciate the opportunity Blackbaud affords our students to engage in meaningful, relevant, and innovative programs. Our students have been the beneficiaries of their generosity for several years. I'd also like to thank CPN (Charleston Promise Neighborhood) for coordinating the event for us. CPN is a valued partner. They continue to provide multiple opportunities/programs that enhance the lives of our students and families".

The students were engaged and inspired in the work that they were doing. Additionally, the Blackbaud counselors were hands on and built relationships with the students as they shared team names and mascots and ideas for construction of their sports stadiums. Students were also treated to lunch from local favorite, D'Allesandro's Pizza, who delivered to campers all over Charleston.

At the end of the day of virtual learning, students from all three of the Charleston Promise Neighborhood Schools had the opportunity to present their projects to the entire group via Zoom. Exercising their public speaking skills, students proudly shared all that they had learned and created that day.

Even amid the Covid19 pandemic that plagues our lives and learning environments, Blackbaud and Charleston Promise Neighborhood found a way to be innovative to bring a great hands on learning experience to our students and to help them make memories that they will never forget.

For more information contact Principal Chris Ryan (843) 764-2234.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally-accredited school district that is committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.