



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 2018**

## **TeenHacks LI: Bringing the Tech Revolution to Long Island Youth Through Successful First Event**

**Syosset, NY** - From September 29th to 30th, a revolutionary event took place for coders and members of New York's STEM community at the CoderSchool Syosset. The first ever teen "hackathon" run by TeenHacks LI, an organization started by Jeffrey Yu, a senior at Roslyn High School with co-founder Wesley Pergament, a junior at Jericho High School. "By Students, for Students."

Calling all designers, coders, makers, and builders to take part in the premier 24-hour high school hackathon, the event garnered over a hundred applicants, but due to space limitations only a fraction could attend. Varying from ages 14 to 18, the event brought together beginners, intermediate and advanced coders to collaborate. With the turnout of around sixty students, the event showed a great diversity of attendees including 45% of ethnic minorities and over a third female. Students traveled from all over, the majority from Long Island, but also had students from New York City, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

The 24-hour event, consisted of several workshops, speakers, and a lot of creativity, as students were competing in teams to create an array of projects. Co-founders, Wesley and Jeffrey collaborated to start this event with the goal of "building a hacker community here on Long Island, with an emphasis placed on innovation and entrepreneurship."

Throughout the event several guest speakers appeared to help as well as advise attendees upon the various fields in computer science and how applicable it is to any career in their future. A few guests include, Nada Anit and Christian Pongratz of NYIT whom awarded to the winners of the event scholarships and lab time to continue working on their respective projects. Additionally, TIBCO, a software company based in Silicon Valley, had provided TeenHacksLI with multiple speakers and mentors. Anthony Buonaspina, CEO of LI Tech Advisors ran a workshop at the hackathon to explain the importance of digital accessibility. Later on, Nassau County Legislature of the 18th District, Joshua Lafazan stopped by to issue a Citation commending the efforts of TeenHacksLI.

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At the end, with little sleep and much excitement, each team presented their projects to a panel of judges consisting of leaders in tech. Projects ranged in seriousness and sophistication. The second place winner created a web extension called Party Preview. “Party Preview implements machine learning algorithms to preview web pages, especially news articles. It uses Indico's political text analysis to predict the political leanings of the web page it is on.” The first place winner created a project called NeuralHelp. “This project allows you to chat with Lily, an autistic based chatbot that is suitable for talking to mentally challenged kids who aren't comfortable talking with others for a set period of time.” Winners were awarded various pieces of hardware, software, and even internships to promote their endeavors in technology.

TeenHacksLI is planning to host another 24- hour hackathon in the near future! Stay posted!

You can find pictures from the event at <https://www.facebook.com/teenhacksli/>.

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