



Five hundred middle-school students gather at Red Deer College to share their video game designs

For immediate release, April 24, 2018: Students from schools in Chinook's Edge School Division and Red Deer Public Schools are gathering at Red Deer College this Friday, to showcase the video games they have created through a unique program called Coding Quest.

The students, who are in Grades 4-8, have been working on their projects since last fall. They have combined cross-curricular research to create their game's story with inquiry-based technical learning to actually code the video game. Their video game creations, along with background documentation they have researched, will all be part of the unique 'arcade' at RDC.

"We are doing project-based learning where we studied groups coming to Canada and learned why they came here. I'm really excited to see what other students have done with their projects," said Greg Morin, a Grade 5 student at École Barrie Wilson Elementary School in Red Deer.

Greg is completing a game involving the immigration of Cambodians to Canada, and his game builds in complexity from avoiding danger to learning to fish and becoming independent. As is the focus of Coding Quest, the learning incorporates science and technology, mathematics, language arts, visual arts and social studies. Students learn fundamental coding skills through the involvement of The Learning Partnership, a national charity dedicated to enhancing publicly funded education to prepare students in Canada for a globally connected world. The result is 500 students ignited by learning – 125 from Chinook's Edge and 375 from Red Deer Public.

"This is such an innovative project and we're thrilled our students had the opportunity to be involved," said Jody Dennis, Principal of Poplar Ridge School in Chinook's Edge, where all Grade 5 & 6 students took part in Coding Quest as part of their Career and Technology Foundations course. "They were totally engaged from the start, and have developed digital skills that so many jobs of the future will need. They got to be creative, to explore, and then apply all of that knowledge to create and code their own video game. They've worked really hard, but it's been exciting for them all along and it's built such confidence. What makes this whole thing so special is that The Learning Partnership provided the materials and the entire opportunity at no cost."

The Learning Partnership provided a training session for all the teachers involved, so they understood how to teach coding through 10 progressive lessons. The students are excited about showing their games at the arcade, although Principal Chris Good from Barrie Wilson Elementary said, "Right now we are coding a video game, but there are a lot of different things where you can use code in design and other industries."

The plan is for students to play everyone else's games and see what they've accomplished. While at RDC's main campus they will also experience using some of the College's educational technology, including green screens and virtual welding, becoming more familiar with how skills they develop using these technologies might expand into post-secondary learning and a future career. Thirty Red Deer College student volunteers from the Bachelor of Education program will help host the students and provide a tour of RDC, including the new Makerspace which opened in Fall 2018.

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“We are excited to host these incredibly talented students from across central Alberta for this event, which is all about creativity and innovation,” said Julia Rheaume, Associate Dean for RDC’s School of Education. “This is a great opportunity for our RDC Education students to develop teaching skills as they lead activities and engage with children who may be in their future classrooms.”

The Arcade event takes place at Red Deer College from 10 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. on Friday, April 27. Schools participating from Chinook’s Edge School Division and Red Deer Public Schools are listed below.

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Schools participating in Coding Quest

Chinook’s Edge School Division:

Poplar Ridge School
River Valley School, Sundre
Penhold Crossing Secondary School
École Innisfail Middle School

Red Deer Public Schools:

École Barrie Wilson Elementary School
École Mountview School
Annie L. Gaetz Elementary School
Don Campbell Elementary School
Glendale Sciences and Technology
G.W. Smith Elementary School