

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Opportunity Youth Code Websites For South L.A. Businesses at CODEchella Event**

*YouthBuild Charter School of California Hosts CODEchella at L.A. Trade Tech College*

(Los Angeles, CA – April 7, 2016) On Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, [YouthBuild Charter School of California](#) (YCSC), with generous support from [Colocation America](#), will host CODEchella, an all-day website coding event at L.A. Trade Tech College from 8:00am to 8:00pm. At the event, ten teams of students will have less than twelve hours to build websites for community members. The forty students participating, who are all former high school dropouts between the ages 16-24, previously had little to no experience in coding websites. The event is the culmination of a week of intensive classes in HTML, CSS, and Adobe Photoshop, designed to help these students learn skills that will translate into jobs to lift them out of poverty. A panel of industry leaders and teachers will judge the students' websites, with awards for the best website design at the end of the night.

"We encourage our young people to be leaders and social justice advocates," said YouthBuild Charter School of California Founder/CEO Phil Matero. "Teaching them how to code will not only open the door to a potential career in the tech industry, but will also provide them with a new skillset to support their communities."

The students will be designing websites for local clients to help give back to their community and promote small businesses and local non-profits. This year's clients include The Community Policing Advisory Board, Colima's Party Supplies, The Fair Chance Project, La Cevicheria, and six others. Students will be judged on their website's design, its ease of navigation, and how well it serves their client's needs.

"Over three years ago YouthBuild Charter School offered us an opportunity to sponsor a new coding program," said Colocation America VP of Online Strategies Samantha Walters. "At the time, we knew the value in teaching students to code but what we did not expect it would transform the lives of the students and their community."

CODEchella is not only an excellent opportunity for YouthBuild Charter School of California students to learn from professionals in the field, it's also a fantastic opportunity for local tech companies to give back to the community and work towards closing the Digital Divide in South Los Angeles. Industry professionals from local graphic design and tech companies, such as [Factual](#) and [Second Spectrum](#), have volunteered to serve as mentors for the teams.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to help equip this next generation of bright, hard-working engineers and entrepreneurs," stated Eric Lui, Director of Data Operations at Factual. "The STEM workforce of 2040 won't-- and can't afford to-- overlook talent, wherever it grows."

CODEchella has continued to grow each year since the inaugural event in 2014 (then called WebSlam). In addition to CODEchella, YCSC has several other computer science initiatives, including a Tech Entrepreneurs Computer Science class launched at the school's South L.A. site in last February.

"Our students are incredibly resilient and resourceful young people," said the school's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Coordinator Nadia Despenza. "I see computer science as a pathway for these young people to transcend some of the obstacles caused by poverty and strengthen their communities."

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#### **About YouthBuild Charter School of California**

YouthBuild Charter School of California (YCSC) provides education at 19 YouthBuild sites across California. YCSC guides young people who have been pushed out of high school to re-engage and graduate high school. They use a different approach to learning, in which students participate in research, analysis and community action projects. They are successful: 85% of students who commit to the program for 1.5 years graduate high school and either enter the workforce or go to college. To learn more, visit the website: [www.youthbuildcharter.org](http://www.youthbuildcharter.org).