



For Immediate Release

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Area Students Take bus Ride of a Lifetime to Learn Coding from Top Technology Leaders

More than 100 South Florida students will take the technology ride of their lives when they board a caravan of buses, led by CNN Hero Estella Pyfrom's Brilliant Bus from West Palm Beach to New Orleans, La., traveling from June 27-July 7.

The children will participate in the 20th Annual Essence Music Festival's #YesWeCode Hackathon, which is part of the new Technology Village, an interactive area featuring hands-on activities, tech-based youth organization presentations, panel discussions, social media contests and more. They will return to West Palm Beach on July 7.

Billed as the Tech Innovation Bus Ride, Broward and Palm Beach county students will learn basic coding, mobile app building and the basics of tech-entrepreneurship from about 200 of the tech industry's brightest developers, designers, investors, and influential business professionals.

The buses also will stop in four major Southern cities: Atlanta, GA, Birmingham, Al., Memphis, Tenn and Jackson, Miss., where local students will board the Brilliant Bus to learn coding. At those stops, the South Florida students will tour African-American cultural landmarks such as the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site (Atlanta), the Lorraine Hotel (Memphis) and the home of slain NAACP Field Officer Medgar Evers (Jackson, Miss).

"This is the opportunity of a lifetime," says Estella Pyfrom, a retired Palm Beach educator who used her retirement money to design, build and retrofit a bus built with computers for low-opportunity children and families. "When Essence invited me to come to their music festival, I said 'I have to bring some children.'"

So, Pyfrom joined forces with Black Girls Code and Startup Edutech, two West Coast technological youth organizations. Their goal is to continue the process of closing the digital divide.

"We jumped at the opportunity to further tech-education," says Jaymes Hines, founder of the Silicon-Valley-based Startup Edutech. "This is more than a partnership. This may be one of the most important technological motivating tools for a sector of African American students".

The students, ages 10 and up, were selected by Brilliant Bus partnership organizations.

For the bus ride students, activities will culminate with the #Yes We Code Hackathon and Tech Village, held from July 4-6, at the Festival in New Orleans.





“We are still fundraising and need some major dollars to make this the best trip for the students,” says Pyfrom. “It takes a lot of fuel to move a fleet of buses 2,200 miles, a lot of meals to feed 100-plus children and chaperons and to house them all,” she says. “The returns on this investment are unlimited.”

To support the trip or learn more, contact 561-665-0151 or 561-985-1889 or 323-217-5619 or visit www.estellasbrilliantbus.org.

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