

For immediate release

Microsoft kicks off YouthSpark #WeSpeakCode Campaign – the largest coding event in Hong Kong

Involved more than 4,800 students and accumulated 6,000 coding hours

A platform to empower youths to learn computer programming and foster home-grown innovation

Hong Kong, 25 March 2015 — As part of Microsoft’s YouthSpark commitment to encourage more young people into STEM (Science Technology Engineering Maths), Microsoft Asia Pacific rolls-out Asia Pacific Week of Code, a campaign to promote coding as a second language. In Hong Kong, the #WeSpeakCode program kicked off in the week of 23 March. More than 4,800 local students from 32 primary and secondary schools have registered to have hands-on experience in coding with accumulated 6,000 coding hours, representing Hong Kong’s largest-ever, territory-wide coding event, and an exciting start to introduce the fun of coding to local youngsters.

“In this digital age, coding is an important part of developing broader skills which helps students to grow their creativity, flexibility and problem-solving abilities. Learning to code enables an individual to become a creator of technology and bring their ideas to life, and change the world,” said Horace Chow, General Manager of Microsoft Hong Kong. “Through #WeSpeakCode, we want to provide young people with an interactive platform to learn computer programming as well as encourage them to pursue a STEM education and ICT-related career. Coding is fun and easily understood, and we believe that it can be a language for everyone.”

To align with the strategy on Information Technology in Education in Hong Kong, #WeSpeakCode is initiated by Microsoft Hong Kong and is fully supported by The Association of I.T. Leaders in Education (AiTLE), The Hong Kong Association for Computer Education (HKACE) and Hong Kong Digital Game-Based Learning Association. Through #WeSpeakCode, Microsoft hopes to encourage as many people as possible to take their first steps towards learning to code by promoting coding as a core part of the school curriculum. They want to see an increase in the uptake of computer science and careers for students, with an additional focus on women, to drive the development of the industry and society.

Coding can provide students with invaluable skills that go beyond the traditional academic curriculum. Microsoft has partnered with Code.org to promote the participation of youths in Hour of Code, a program which is simple, fun and interactive, and tailored for students aged 6 and over, providing a free one-hour lesson on the basics of computer science. Students can learn the basic concepts of coding through drag and drop programming, and through creating fun drawings or games. For those aged 11 or above, Microsoft is also offering a training course, TouchDevelop, which allows users to create apps on iPad, iPhone, Android, PC, Mac and Windows Phone via a touch-friendly editor; making coding fun and possible to do anywhere, even on a phone or tablet.

Microsoft does not limit its support to software and hardware but also provides train-for-trainer classes for teachers, so that they can customize their own coding sessions. 30 teachers from 16 schools attended the train-for-trainer classes. In the long run, this enables them to engage more students in coding.

“As coding has become an increasingly important aspect of IT in education, we are very pleased to have participated in Microsoft’s #WeSpeakCode program,” said Dr. Paul Cho Hee-chuen, the Principal of HKCCCU Logos Academy, one of the participating schools in the campaign. “Not only will our students be trained in coding and have the opportunity to improve critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, our teachers will also get training courses to facilitate and promote coding education.”

Microsoft envisions coding to be spread all over the world and has hosted 75 coding events across Asia Pacific in 13 different countries, with over 20,000 youths in the region experiencing the fun of coding, empowering young people to become creators of technology. Moreover, Microsoft also supported and took part in the Hour of Code organized by Code.org in 2014 during Computer Science Education Week (8-14 December), providing valuable opportunities for more than 7 million students around the world to learn to code.

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About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq “MSFT”) is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential. Microsoft Hong Kong was established in 1991.

For more information, press only:

At Microsoft

Alice Li

Tel: (852) 2804 4130

Email: aliceli@microsoft.com

At Waggener Edstrom Communications

Diana Pong

Tel: (852) 2578 2205

Email: dpong@waggeneredstrom.com