

**Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Hour of Code**

**Area.** The week of December 9-13 was designated to be the annual Computer Science Education Week, and a non-profit group called Code.org launched a massive campaign to spread computer programming to one million school students. From elementary to college, educators were encouraged to sign up and use a set of lesson plans and exercises to introduce their students to the world of computer programming. Steve Jobs has been quoted as saying, "Everybody in this country should learn how to program a computer...because it teaches you how to think." Beyond that sentiment, virtually everyone's lives are touched by computers today in our highly technical, ever-changing world, yet how many individuals, students or adults, actually understand how computers work or get the basics of programming, or coding? By introducing the Hour of Code across the nation, the coordinators at Code.org hoped to spark an interest in their quest to have Computer Science become part of the core STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) curriculum as part of graduation requirements.

At Assabet Valley, Alexia Forhan, a biology instructor, chose to sign up and let her students try the Hour of Code. "Students got a taste for programming with Hour of code by participating in an activity that combines science with technology called Disease Epidemic! The activity is designed to give students a first

experience with Python programming, and has been specially designed for the Hour of Code. Students used the programming language Python to model a disease outbreak and solve the curious case of the glowing nose and to discover what caused the outbreak of the disease that created an epidemic. Ends up being a cat that causes the epidemic and students are able to discover this in code. This was a good segway into the Anatomy unit for our Biology course- and also into the environmental unit in forensic science course. This and many other content activities can be found on <http://code.org/learn>. We all had fun with it, and I plan to research other activities that will give my students a bit more experience working with computer programming. I agree that we all have to embrace new technology as it affects our lives, and helping my students stay ahead of the curve is of paramount importance to me as a STEM teacher.”

Tagline: Participating in the national Hour of Code during Computer Science Education Week, biology teacher Alexia Forhan gets Kaylee Besse (Leicester) started on the coding for a science lesson.