# Denver hosts global Computer Clubhouse Conference

It is a long way from Amman, Jordan, to a tucked away corner of a conference room in the Denver Sheraton Hotel, but for Suha Al-Syouf of the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development Fund, and more than 100 educators from all around the globe, the trip to Denver for the 21st Intel Computer Clubhouse Annual Conference from April 7-11 was another stunning example that technology has limitless power to unite and advance the world.



Suha Al-Syouf of the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development Fund shares projects from the youth members at her Computer Clubhouse in Amman, Jordan at the recent Computer Clubhouse Annual Conferencein Denver on April 7-11.

"We are so happy to be here to see things that people from all over the world are doing that we can take back with us and share with our children," said Al-Syouf in front of a display of technology projects students from her Computer Clubhouse in Amman produced. "And Colorado is so beautiful, especially the mountains. Red Rocks reminds me of parts of Jordan. We are so grateful for the Computer Clubhouse to have the opportunity to come here."

Every year, the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network, a global organization that works with underserved youth to build confidence and develop 21st century skills, brings together Computer Clubhouse staff, executive directors, sponsors and collaborators from organizations all across the world for an intense conference that gives participants news ideas, skills and perspectives they can take home and use to better serve the needs of their respective Clubhouses. This is the first year the Conference took place in Colorado, and representatives from 16 countries, including Costa Rica, Denmark, Ireland, Israel, Jordan, Mexico, New Zealand, Palestine, Philippines and South America, traveled to Denver to participate.

In the bustling expo hall of the Sheraton where representatives were checking out the creativity of students from all over the world, Gilbert Valenzuela of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe in Tucson, Arizona, and Rodrigo Castellon from the Gila River Boys and Girls Club, the only two Native American reservations in the U.S. to host Intel Computer Clubhouses, shared video presentations their students shot, edited and produced.

"Our kids are creative and talented and we are always blown away by what they come up with," said Valenzuela. "For them to learn this technology and to use it to express themselves is very powerful and will have a positive and lasting impact on their lives."

Gilbert Valenzuela of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe in Tucson, Arizona, and Rodrigo Castellon from the Gila River Boys and Girls Club, the only two Native American reservations in the U.S. to host Intel Computer Clubhouses, shared video and art projects.

Besides sharing projects and ideas for two days in an expo format, participants also had the chance to attend a full lineup of breakout sessions over the conference to help them improve all facets of operations at their home Intel Computer Clubhouses. Sessions ranged from developing mentors, improving fundraising, engaging parents and even learning how to use computational design to create temporary tattoos. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a founding partner of the Computer Clubhouse, continues to play a vital and active role, as several MIT Media Lab instructors were in Denver to present. MIT also provides the MIT Lifelong Kindergarten group that continues to develop new software that Computer Clubhouses have access to before the public.

Colorado is home to two Intel Computer Clubhouses, the Gold Crown Computer Clubhouse in Lakewood and the Southeast YMCA in Colorado Springs. Fran Baker, Executive Director of Gold Crown Foundation Enrichment, forged a partnership between Gold Crown and the Intel Computer Clubhouse more than 10 years ago, and was thrilled to help bring the Annual Conference to Denver.

"We have been traveling for the last 10 years to these awesome conferences, and we always knew Denver would be a great place to host one," said Baker. "We were absolutely thrilled to showcase our city and our Clubhouse to colleagues from all over the world. Luckily, everybody was able to enjoy some great weather and explore a lot of different parts of the city beyond just a hotel ballroom. It is exciting to think about people from all over the world talking about what a great time they had here in Colorado."

Inside each of the 100 Computer Clubhouses that are located around the world in 20 countries, young people ages 8-18 work with adult mentors to explore their ideas through engaging in digital media, art and technology tools to express, invent and collaborate. Within each Clubhouse, youth projects reflect an artist's studio, inventor's workshop, design house, sound stage, hacker space, music studio, and video game development lab where young people become *creators* rather than passive consumers of technology. In the process, Clubhouse members follow their inspirations to learn and develop skills that help them realize their potential in this new digital age.

Computer Clubhouse Coordinators from Minnesota and Chicago share video projects their youth members produced with other Computer Clubhouse Coordinators from around the world at the Annual Conference that was in Denver April 7-11.

"At the Clubhouse, youth are inspired to channel their creativity through technology, as you can see from all this great work," said Gail Breslow, Director of the global Intel Computer Clubhouse Network, as she marveled at all the displays at the expo. "The staff, who nurture young people's creativity and provide inspiration, are the most important ingredient to a successful Clubhouse, and we are thrilled to be able to bring Clubhouse staff together in Colorado for this personal and professional development."

The Annual Conference of the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network is sponsored by the Intel Foundation, with support from Best Buy Children's Foundation, Adobe Systems and others.