



CHARU PASTERNAK AND HER CBT NUGGETS CREW

## JOB PROGRAMS FOR PROGRAMMERS

Tech companies want local students to fill their job openings

There are 418 tech companies registered in Lane County, and many of them are hiring, according to Allison Weatherly, the event coordinator for Technology Association of Oregon (TAO). She says most of these tech companies are looking to shop local when they're hiring, so several programs are setting up Lane County high school students to train for these jobs.

Pointing to the TAO site that links to tech companies to prospective employees, Weatherly says, "Techoregon.org/jobs will showcase all the tech companies that are here in Lane County." Programs like Apprenti, a new tech apprenticeship program, are built to help students in high school forge a path into these higher-paying tech jobs.

Heidi Larwick is the director of Connected Lane County, the organization that runs Elevate Lane County. That program aims to "create opportunities for students to have work learning or career connected learning," she says.

"The program started focused on high school but we're slowly also moving into the middle school space," Larwick adds. Elevate started with a focus on tech jobs (though it now includes industry and will soon expand to health care), and includes internships, job shadows, industry tours and career fairs. The program serves 16 school districts and "47,000 students" in Lane County, according to Larwick.

Students interested in pursuing tech jobs can get started in high school and get more training at Lane Community College. Larwick says that a third of the tech jobs in Lane County may hire high school graduates if they have the right training. "They need to be able to solve problems on

their own, they need to be a reliable team member, they need to have good communication skills and be curious and willing to learn," she says.

Another third of the local tech jobs available (more than Charu Pasternak 400 total, according to a recent City Club of Eugene program) require a bachelor's degree and another third require a few years of college. One program Larwick highlighted is the LCC computer information technology program. "That's a two year program and they can learn about computer applications, computer support, application development and programming and website development," she says, adding that the last two on that list are in high demand.

Matt Sayre, director of TAO in the southern Willamette Valley, says one student developed a passion for the tech industry after attending a TAO event and meeting a few people at CBT Nuggets, a local tech company. "Nine months from zero, no training, to current day, he's now talking to them about how he can work part-time and continue his education at LCC."

With companies opening their doors for students to job shadow or intern, Sayre says "Kids can get the skills they need to get into high wage, high demand occupations." He points to jobs programs offered in the county, like Apprenti. "It's a way for the growing tech sector and the growth there to be inclusive, so that economic prosperity is for everyone. This rising tide truly will raise all boats," Sayre says.

CBT Nuggets is one of those hiring companies. According to software engineer Charu Pasternak, the company

creates video tutorials to teach IT skills. "You get the basic foundation for IT or any career in the university, but then you need an additional push to get the certifications so you can get the really nice jobs," she says. CBT Nuggets helps people attain these certifications. The company grew from the two founders in 1999 to over 150 employees today, she says.

Pasternak has been at CBT Nuggets for two and a half years, and she says, "We literally live the culture that we try to sell to our customers because all the employees within the company are required to train."

"Every day I go into work and I'm required to learn something new, and that makes for an amazing day because every day I'm better than what I was yesterday."

The company is hiring for a number of positions, Pasternak says.

Pipeworks, a game-making company local to Eugene, is also hiring. Started in 1999, the company now has over 70 employees, according to PR specialist Liz Lambert. "We do mentorship training, so depending on what your specialty is we do have mentorships where people will teach you specifically what types of programs they use."

Lambert adds that the company is hiring for quality assurance (QA) positions and designer positions. Tina Cruz, the HR director for Pipeworks, says that QA positions have opened up because "we just moved some people out of QA and into other positions in the company which is great. We do a lot of internal grooming and development and we move people into higher paid roles." ■

*Internships and mentorships are available at CBT Nuggets for high school and college students. Those interested in applying can email careers@cbtnuggets.com or check the company's website, cbtnuggets.com. Those interested in applying for a job at Pipeworks can check pipeworks.com and look at the careers page.*



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