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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – September 1, 2015

Computer Science Comes to MHS with a Little Help From Our Friends

Monroe, WA – For the first time in its history this fall Monroe High School will offer an Introduction to Computer Science (CS) class with the help of four talented volunteers from the technology industry, and a Microsoft corporate giving program called TEALS.

TEALS (Technology Education And Literacy in Schools) helps schools start up Computer Science courses by finding local computer programmers interested in volunteering, and training them how to teach alongside high school teachers. As most high school teachers aren't computer science majors, the programmers offer their expertise while the teacher learns the curriculum. Eventually, the teachers take over on their own.

Our community's approval of the 2014 Technology Levy meant that MHS would finally be able to meet the requirements of the TEALS partnership. "I was thrilled," said John Lombardi, MHS principal. "If we can better prepare our kids to step out into the real world of work, that's my goal," said Lombardi.

Monroe High is fortunate to have math teacher Jim Bogesvang as its Computer Science teacher. Bogesvang actually has 15 years of working in the CS field himself before his passion for teaching drew him to the classroom. He's thrilled to finally bring a Computer Science class to MHS. "It's a huge opportunity for the students, but it's also something that means a lot to me," he said. "It was a great living, doing exciting work."

Volunteer Eric Battalio is a programming manager at Microsoft, but his bachelor's degree is in English literature. He felt inspired to volunteer so he could show students that programming isn't just for people with engineering backgrounds. "I did English as a kid because I thought math would be too difficult," said Battalio, who kept programming as a hobby, and found that he was able to do it after all. "I was able to get through it, to say 'maybe this is something I can do,' he explained.

Battalio hopes that students who are not thinking about an engineering future will enjoy the curriculum enough to consider it. The other volunteers are Philippe Blais, Hilton L'Orange and David Shoemaker, all Microsoft employees.