Ready, Set, Connect! (RSC) - a collaboration between Community Technology Network (CTN) and Oakland Public Library (OPL) – is a program that gives tech-savvy 16-24-year-olds the experience and skills needed for a future in technology-focused employment.

Through a program of on-the-job training, participants are supported in the development of professional and personal skills, and are connected to mentors from high-profile Bay Area technology companies.

Unlike ordinary work-readiness programs, RSC has a wider community focus. Through weekly volunteer service at seven library locations, participants become Digital Literacy Trainers and learn to put their superior technical knowledge to good use by teaching basic digital literacy skills to library patrons.

The 2013 pilot program (RSC13) ran for 12 weeks and engaged 17 young people, who helped 349 older adults. The following fall, the program was extended to 8 months, and in May 2014 a second session (RSC14) concluded with 19 youth trainers who served 1,723 library patrons.
RSC team member Minnie He helps a patron understand how to access communication apps on her iPad. There is a very high demand for digital literacy services at the Asian Branch. Many seniors now own mobile devices that will help them communicate with their loved ones or find out health information.

RSC15: October 2014 – May 2015

Out of a pool of 80 applicants, over 40 qualified young people were chosen to be interviewed. Of those interviewed, 20 candidates were selected for the RSC team.

Over the course of 8 months, the 2014-15 cohort received weekly professional development sessions, met with tech professionals, visited tech company offices, and received personalized resume and LinkedIn consultation. The cohort learned about many of the diverse employment opportunities available in the tech sector and of their career pathways. Along with weekly participation in training and professional development opportunities, the cohort worked on projects to develop their portfolios and make a positive contribution to the program and library patrons in the community.

Participants also learned how to be Digital Literacy Trainers, enabling them to help hundreds of patrons use the computer and mobile technology in order to access crucial services, information, and opportunities to enhance their quality of life.

THE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

- **Computer tutoring:** Allocated to a library branch, participants trained patrons on such tasks as completing online job application forms; resume creation in Word; downloading e-books; and using smartphones, e-readers, and tablet devices.

- **Tech training:** Participants received training in how to use programs they may not have had access to in the past, including InDesign, Photoshop, Google Sites, and Google Drive.

- **Designing a promotional campaign:** Participants learned how to use software and web-based tools to market their computer tutoring services to the local community.

- **Creating a professional profile:** Participants were given help developing their resume and using web-based job search tools, including LinkedIn.

- **Group project work:** Working in teams, participants completed an assignment of their own design. Projects included a mobile app to help patrons find answers to their questions, a website with informative resources for digital learners, and a coding class for young library patrons in East Oakland.

- **Site visits:** Participants visited Google, Schoolzilla, and Bluewolf Consulting. They gained insight into a real work environment, completed professional etiquette training, and received mentoring from tech professionals.
RSC15: Vital Statistics

- **30-week** program in **7 library branches**
- **20 youth** were recruited for the program from underserved areas of Oakland and Alameda County
- **18 youth** finished the program
- **64 hours** of training in advanced digital job skills was received by each participant
- **1,143 adults** were tutored in basic digital literacy
- **809 hours** of tutoring service was provided by the youth, **30% of those hours** were delivered in a language other than English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>People Trained</th>
<th>Hours Volunteered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81st Avenue Branch Library</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Branch Library</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chavez Branch Library</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>154.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimond Branch Library</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastmont Branch Library</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Library</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockridge Branch Library</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,143</strong></td>
<td><strong>809</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*RSC team member Malik Grant shows a Dimond Branch patron how to log in to the library's computers.*
RSC team members Diana Pablo and Daniela Hernandez prepare to hold an Hour of Code session for young people at the 81st Avenue Branch.

RSC team member Yong Yu Lei works with two Asian Branch patrons on tablet basics.
MEET:
Ching Yan Lee

How did the interns help you, and what did you learn?
They showed me how to use my iPad. I now know what the icons mean, how to type and write on the screen, send email, and connect to the Internet. I know the importance of usernames and passwords. I can use apps.

How do you apply those skills now?
I use the iPad to communicate with friends and family members.

What do you think of the program? How can this program improve next year?
I am thankful that the interns take their time out voluntarily to help people like me. Most of them are students and are busy all the time. The interns are important because no one in my family is willing to put time in to teach me the basics of using tech, and if I ask, they often get irritated. The interns are always patient and explain everything step by step. I urge you to continue the program next year because the demand for tutors is really high.

RSC team members Brenda Robledo and Salvador Macias hold a typing class at the Chavez Branch. The tutors at Chavez Branch noticed that most patrons had trouble typing and decided to create a class to help patrons become familiar with computer keyboards.
PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

The numbers look good, but we love to read the feedback from participants and beneficiaries about the impact of the program. Here are just a few of comments from RSC Interns:

“RSC has allowed me to gain new skills that I was interested in (like designing, marketing, and communication) and also meet new mentors. I enjoyed meeting new peers and connecting with businesses to be more prepared about the workforce. I think, most importantly, I learned to not just sit around and wait for things to happen, but to work hard in the present so that I can work towards my future.”

“RSC has given me experience and confidence in working with technology and the Bay Area communities. The skills I gained in RSC are essential in most professions, not just technology related ones.”

“RSC has definitely helped me grow professionally, from building my professional profile on LinkedIn to making connections with people in the technology field during the trainings. In addition, I have gained experience in customer service by helping patrons on the computer.”

A patron of the 81st Avenue Branch learns about educational games she can play with her little brother. Many children and teens frequent this branch and learn about technology and computers through games and the computer lab.
RSC team member Perla Paredes goes over Internet navigation basics with a patron from the Main Library.

RSC team member Daniela Hernandez helps a Main Library patron understand how to work with email.
BRENDA ROBLED
I love anything that has to do with computers and the Internet. This summer I did a program called Girls Who Code, where I learned how to program. I love going on Tumblr and designing my own blog, I also love working with people and helping people.

BRITTANY TRUONG
I am a freshmen at Berkeley City College and will be applying for transfer this fall. I hope to attend UCLA or UCD as an economics major. I have previous experience at summer day camps as a teacher assistant, and I applied to RSC! so I could use my communication skills, as well as expand my technological skill set. I am always looking for new things to learn and am not afraid to fail in order to succeed. This program has allowed me to meet new peers and mentors and to share the skills that I learned to help the community at the Oakland Main Library in the computer lab. RSC! has pushed me to never stop learning, and I am grateful to have participated in it!

DANIELA HERNANDEZ
I am good at math and science. I enjoy reading and have taken a few coding classes. I also like volunteering, seeing as how I also volunteer at the Chabot Space and Science Center. At school I also take part in student council and the leadership team.

DIANA PABLO
I am a girl who is passionate about learning new things every day and trying something new as well. I play soccer and the violin. I am a Junior at my current school. In my free time I like doing community service and joining extracurricular activities that I love to do or grab my attention. I like spending time with my friends and family as well. I love hiking and going outside, open to nature and its beauty.

FRANCISCA SEGURA
I’m very good at science and math. I enjoy volunteering and being a part of new things. In my school I’m in the leadership program and student council. I like working with computers and find that I’m very good at explaining things to people.
2015 Cohort

GARY FREDERICK
My main hobby is computer programming, but I like to skateboard and snowboard so I can stay physically active. I love working in groups and collaborating with others to get something done like I do in my AP computer science class. It’s really fun solving problems with other people and just helping around when I can. My main programming language is JavaScript, but I practice HTML5, PHP, and MySQL. I’m currently working on a website, so it’s cool to share the knowledge I have about computers with other people.

JAI SRISVATAV
I love computers. I started teaching myself computer science more than five years ago. I have gone to Carnegie Mellon University to study computer science and electrical engineering, and have started the Computer Science Club at my school.

JENNIFER RUBIO
I participated in a coding program during the summer called Girls Who Code, and they pushed my love for technology and set me on a path to pursuing any opportunities offered with anything involving computer science. I am a striving UX engineer, and I am sure to take local opportunities to help anyone in my community. In my spare time, I enjoy hanging out with friends and finding new opportunities in the tech field.

LEANNA NGUYEN
I’m in 11th grade and attend Oakland School for the Arts, where my emphasis is digital media. While school is in session, I’d say it dominates about 75% of my life. I’m either doing something academic or arts-wise in relation to school. As a side note, I actively participate in graphic design, photography, and filming (which is my order from favorite to least favorite).

MALIK GRANT
I’m a person with a wide variety of interests, including Parkour, free running, Wing Chun, wrestling, acrobatics, gymnastics, reading, and writing stories. I also take a big interest in debating philosophy and politics.
MINNIE HE
I just want to say thank you again for the amazing past eight months! Participating in RSC not only opened my eyes to so many opportunities, but I was also able to challenge myself beyond my comfort zones, such as developing public speaking and communication skills that I was really bad at.

PERLA PAREDES
I am a junior at Oakland Tech and am 16 years old. I was born in Oakland and I really like to be useful in some way, whether it is helping out my mom around the house or helping my parents when they go cater somewhere. I also like to read: it is one of my favorite pastimes.

PICHMOLIDA MEAN
I want to challenge myself and use my creative and artistic talents to apply them to my future career as a graphic design major. Since the age of five, I have loved using my artistic talent. I first started off drawing as a hobby because of reading manga. After I began receiving compliments from my peers and teachers, I realized that I had an understanding of detail and imagery completely different from theirs. With much encouragement from the people around me, I have continued to draw for fifteen years now.

SALVADOR MACIAS
I’m a good dancer in bachata, cumbia, and merengue, but not banda. I spend a lot of time on the Internet. I hope to have a chance to gain more skills in technology and to one day put those skills to work.

SARA RAY
My hobbies include digital photography, utilizing programs such as Photoshop and generic photo editing applications. I enjoy fanfiction and social media, such as YouTube and Tumblr. In my free time, I enjoy drawing, painting, and biking.
TEAH RAMSEY
I’m in my junior year in high school, and I love to be involved. I’m a student council member. I participate in the fall play, two clubs, and track and field. I’m more of a leader; I like to lead my own projects and ideas. I’m confident in my learning abilities, and I love meeting new people. Most of all, I’m adventurous. Whether it be taking a certain class in school or joining a technology program, I love to try new things.

TOMAS PABLO-AHILON
Parents originally from Guatemala, I was born here in Oakland, California. I am 16 years of age and I attend Oakland Charter High School, which is one of the highest ranked schools in California. I joined this program because I want to pursue a career in computer engineering. Aside from that, I enjoy playing soccer and meeting new people. It so happens that communicating is one of my best skills since I am very talkative.

YONGYU LEI
Thank you for supporting and guiding me over these past eight months. I still remember how nervous I was during the interview and how excited I am to become a part of Ready, Set, Connect!. Eight months is not a long time, but the program created memories that will last a lifetime. Your hard work, dedication, and leadership have made RSC into the best program where every player benefited (the patrons, the tutors). Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this great program. I will surely miss the program and everyone who is in it.
Special thanks to all the volunteer speakers and trainers who shared their time and expertise with our youth this year:

- Chris Anderson  Leader of Customer Happiness, Schoolzilla
- Leo Bialis-White  VP of Impact, Schoolzilla
- Adam Black  Senior Product Manager, Schoolzilla
- Danielle Bowers  Data and Trends Manager, Google Plus
- Laura Brigham  Business Analyst, Bluewolf Consulting
- Andrew Demcak  Branch Manager, Eastmont
- Maureen Elia  Head of Circulation, Main Library
- Caroline Galindo  Impact Team Lead, Schoolzilla
- Brian Guenther  Branch Manager, Martin Luther King Jr. Branch
- Stephanie Heald  Owner, Symbolist Studio LLC
- Kevin Louie  Sr. Business Analyst, Bluewolf Consulting
- Cynthia Mackey  Owner, Winning Strategies LLC
- Sharon McKellar  Community Relations Librarian, OPL
- Hallie Montoya  Director of Marketing, Schoolzilla
- Clay Murphy  Technical Writer, Google
- Melanie Reeves  Finance and Operations Associate, Schoolzilla
- Jonathan Stanley  Product Marketing, Bluewolf Consulting
- Katherine Stewart  Marketing Project Coordinator, Bluewolf Consulting
- Liz Swarthout  Agile Business Executive, Bluewolf Consulting
- Mana Tominaga  Supervising Librarian, DPL
- Mayra Vega  Designer, Schoolzilla
- Ross Warnlof  Corporate Marketing, Bluewolf Consulting
- Heidi Williamson  Web Engineer, Schoolzilla

We'd also like to thank the many Oakland Public Library staff members that work closely with the Ready, Set, Connect! participants in the computer labs throughout the year. With their help and support, youth get the opportunity to connect with working professionals who create tremendous change in Oakland's communities.