



East Cooper Center for
Advanced Studies

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Media Release

Three East Cooper CAS students place in STEM competition

Mount Pleasant, SC - Three students from the East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies placed in the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) Aspirations in Computing High School Competition. Audrina Cruz was named the winner in the Junior division, Addy Lanz earned an honorable mention in the Junior division, and Sylvi Wright was named a Rising Star in the Sophomore division.

The NCWIT Aspirations in Computing (AiC) High School Award honors 9th - 12th grade students for their computing-related achievements and interests, and encourages them to pursue their passions. Award recipients are selected based on their aptitude and aspirations in technology and computing, as demonstrated by their computing experience, computing-related activities, leadership experience, persistence, and future plans.

"In a field that makes us feel isolated and insignificant, it is so important to work together and actively seek out representation and opportunities," said Lanz. "Women in STEM are capable of so much impact within technology and computing if we advocate for ourselves and fight for a seat at the table."

The multi-tiered award structure includes Winner, Honorable Mention, and Rising Star designations at National and Regional Affiliate levels. Apple, Bank of America, Jane Street, and Microsoft sponsor the NCWIT AiC High School Award.

According to Lisa Luttrell, East Cooper CAS's Project Lead The Way Advanced Placement (PLTW/AP) Computer Science teacher, all three students are incredible young women and talented programmers currently enrolled in PLTW/AP Computer Science A - a first-year college course in Java.

Lanz and Wright are active participants on the Coding Team and just participated in their first competition at the College of Charleston on February 14, 2025. Cruz and Lanz also just attended the Carolina Women in Computing Conference.

"As the only girl in my computer science class, I know how important it is to encourage more young women to explore STEM," said Cruz. "Attending the Women in Computing conference showed me the power of representation and community, and I hope to inspire other girls to pursue their passions in technology."

Wright said it feels good to be recognized in a field that is predominantly male.

"I also love knowing that I am a part of a bigger community of people who share my same interests and that I could possibly encourage other young girls to pursue their interests even if it's not the gender norm," Wright added.

"Promoting women in STEM is a true passion of mine, and I'm always looking for more opportunities," said Luttrell. "Having diversity in technology is important because it brings different perspectives to the table and drives innovation."

All three students will attend an award ceremony on March 16, 2025, in Columbia.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse portfolio of educational options and specialized programs delivered to the students of CCSD through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools and programs. Rich educational opportunities for students include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; military; dual credit; and many more.