Ada Developers Academy Announces Plans for Third Class of Students, Spin-out from Parent Organization

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SEATTLE, WA – Ada Developers Academy ("Ada"), a Seattle-based not-for-profit program offering free software development training to women, today announced its spring 2015 session – the organization’s third class – which will begin in May. Coinciding with this announcement, Ada and parent organization the Technology Alliance also announced plans for the program to spin out and transition to becoming its own nonprofit.

Applications to join the spring 2015 session of students will be accepted between February 9 and February 23, with instruction slated to begin May 4. The applications process is highly competitive; during the last application round in July 2014, over 200 women from across the country applied for the 24 available slots in the second class. The program distinguishes itself by charging no tuition and offering financial support to participants throughout the program. This unique model allows Ada students to focus on their studies during their year-long training, which combines classroom instruction with internships at local tech companies.

Each of the 15 graduates in Ada’s inaugural class received job offers, with average starting wages of $75,000 per year. The second class of students is scheduled to graduate on August 31, 2015.

“We tailored the program to provide women a path into the industry, and it’s clearly working,” said co-founder Elise Worthy, who serves as Ada’s CTO. “We can’t wait to build on that success with our next class of students. The momentum of this program is proof positive of the community support for improving gender diversity in our tech workforce.”

Since it was launched in October 2013, Ada has been met with overwhelming support from the region’s tech companies, who contribute monetary sponsorship, actively engage as mentors, and provide hands-on experience through internships. Sponsor companies herald the program for not only training skilled programmers, but for also creating a novel and effective way to combat gender imbalance within the tech industry. Fourteen Puget Sound tech companies, including Expedia, Zillow, Amazon, Redfin, and Nordstrom, are currently sponsoring Ada students.
“The tech industry faces a shortage of qualified workers, as well as a persistent gender gap,” said Rogers Weed, Vice President at 1Energy Systems and chair of the Ada Steering Committee. “Ada is addressing both, and it’s doing so very effectively. This is an innovative program, and we’re excited to see it receive such great support from the area’s tech industry. We believe that support will continue to grow, as Ada continues to train smart, qualified new programmers.”

Due to its success, Ada’s co-founders – Elise Worthy, Scott Case of EnergySavvy, and Susannah Malarkey of the Technology Alliance – discussed the best way to scale the program going into its third class. The decision was made to spin the program out, ending its formal incubation period with the Technology Alliance, and beginning its process of becoming an independent nonprofit organization. Boston-based nonprofit Third Sector New England will serve as fiscal sponsor during this process.

The Technology Alliance – a coalition of leaders from the state’s top tech companies and research institutions – has long served as incubator for programs that address specific needs in the tech economy. Examples have included the Alliance of Angels to improve the region’s venture capital climate, and the Digital Learning Commons to improve education. The cultivation of Ada is the latest in this series of initiatives.

“One of the TA’s greatest strengths is identifying a need, developing a solution, and finding the right people to make it work,” said Susannah Malarkey, Executive Director of the Technology Alliance. “We’re proud that Ada has met with such success, and are looking forward to its next chapter.”

For more information on Ada’s applications process, please visit www.adadevelopersacademy.org/applicants.

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