



Lorain High School senior Niyah Jackson, left, sits with juniors Gannon Rutherford and Lee Caceres Rivera, right, as the team consults with mock clients in the continued development of their website Wednesday.

Tech development program readies Lorain students for future careers



Garrett Looker
The Chronicle-Telegram

Jul 22, 2026 3:45 PM

Inside a back room of Lorain High School, three students huddled around a laptop Wednesday as they plotted, schemed and focused on where they were headed.

For weeks, the three students have collaborated to build something that isn't particularly real: A website for a company that doesn't exist.

Regardless, the experience will have real-world implications, they said, as they push forward to possible tech careers.

"This has been a very enlightening experience," said senior Niyah Jackson. "Coding, while difficult, has also been very helpful with my problem-solving skills, with my communication skills. ... I want to be a video game designer, so this will be very helpful in the future."

The tech team of Lorain students is rounded out by juniors Gannon Rutherford and Lee Caceres Rivera. For several weeks now, they have been meeting with members of the Nordson Corporation Foundation, which have provided support for the students and have acted as mock clients.

Wednesday's meeting was part of the Student Tech Corps program, which is intended to give young learners the experience of client-developer relationships found in the field of technology. In total, 24 high school students throughout Lorain County are a part of the program.

"Career-connected learning becomes even more meaningful when students have the opportunity to work alongside professionals who use these skills every day," Lisa M. Chambers, CEO of Tech Corps, said in a statement. "Through this partnership, Nordson professionals are helping students understand what success looks like in the workplace while building the confidence and experience that prepares them for what's next."

According to Tech Corps, the program gives students the skills to tackle a future in technology. The end result is something they can add to a portfolio, which could potentially lead to later professional opportunities.

Before joining the program, Gannon said that he had some coding experience. But now, he realizes just how complex things can get when diving into technology and building within cyberspace.

"This program has meant a lot to me," Gannon said, adding that he has always thought of following a path toward a career in technology. "This has made me realize how much better and skilled I am at coding."

Gannon said that the program taught him what specific jobs he may pursue in the future, such as cybersecurity.

Although much of the program is focused on technology and career-readiness, Lee was still able to find elements of art within the work.

"Actually, coming here has kind of grounded me," Lee said as her teammates noted that she had designed the website's logo. "I realized coding is a bit more complex. ... When designing our website, we were looking into different layouts for it, and I was trying to see how my art could kind of play into that."

Chelsey Young, the chief information officer with Nordson, was one of the professionals aiding the students virtually Wednesday.

"I've enjoyed working with the students," Young said, adding that acting as a mock client for the students has fostered "new thinking and a different focus, helping to sort of shape future technology talent."

"I've enjoyed working with the students," Young said, adding that acting as a mock client for the students has fostered "new thinking and a different focus, helping to sort of shape future technology talent."

In a statement, Nordson's principal IT analyst Jerry Berndobler said that the program has been beneficial for the organization, as well as the students.

"At Nordson, we believe strong communities start with helping students succeed before they enter the workforce," Berndobler stated. "This experience gave us the opportunity to share our knowledge while showing students how to work with clients, solve business challenges, and communicate professionally. I have no doubt many of these students will become the innovators and leaders who shape Northeast Ohio's future."

Contact Garrett Looker at glooker@chroniclet.com.

SHARE STORY

