

# **Cloud Wise Academy - A new path into a technological world**

**Submitted by Cloud Wise Academy**

**For more information, contact: Sean Kittrick, [sean@cloudwiseacademy.com](mailto:sean@cloudwiseacademy.com)**

Cloud Wise Academy is a technology school that aims to help students break into new careers as fast as possible. It offers six-week-long in-person courses on a number of technology-related disciplines, with a focus on practical industry skills. These courses take place at the Shasta Venture Hub. Courses cover such topics as creating websites (using HTML, CSS, Javascript), WordPress, and Search Engine Optimization.

The first Cloud Wise Academy course began in late July in 2016. At the end of this course, one student, Jake Hinton, had already sold his first website. Since then, a number of graduates from Cloud Wise Academy have found new careers in technology. Indeed, Cloud Wise Academy has met and exceeded many of the expectations of its backers in a matter of months. But the technology school concept has been a long time in the making.

## **The history of Cloud Wise Academy**

Cloud Wise Academy was created to solve a basic but persistent problem for Shasta County: Businesses in Shasta County desperately need employees with tech skills, but not many people in the area possess these skills. This unfortunate reality held the area back from developing a competitive, 21st-century economy. The Shasta Economic Development Corporation, a public/private partnership between several local city governments and about 40 corporations, had made it a priority to solve this issue.

First attempts were somewhat rocky. A company called Code It! proved very successful at teaching area youth about technology, but gained less traction in the area of adult professional employment. For two years, the effort floundered. Eventually, the EDC partnered with Joe Mckenna, the CEO of a web marketing firm called Cloud Potential. Mckenna and Tony Giovaniello, the president of the Shasta Economic Development Corporation, based the Cloud Wise Academy model on a technology training organization in Fresno called GeekWise Academy.

Progress has been swift since Cloud Wise Academy was founded in the spring of 2016. In September, Tony Giovaniello spoke about the objectives of the Academy, saying, "There was always an economic goal for it. We also thought it might be an opportunity to change some lives that needed a new path or some hope. As it turns out, that has

become a very big part of the effort, which is probably the most invigorating aspect of the school.”

### **What a new path looks like**

Three graduates from Cloud Wise Academy have gone to work for Cloud Potential itself, including this writer. One of these interns - Rodrick Dusio MacDermott - joined the class through the Cloud Wise Academy scholarship set up by the Shasta Regional Community Foundation.

Another graduate of one of the first courses, Joe Wallace, found an internship with [Adjoy](#) - a Redding-based tech startup that creates advertisements for mobile games. He initially found about Cloud Wise Academy classes through the Smart Business Resource Center, and received help from the administrators there in signing up.

Eric Casequin is CTO and co-founder of Adjoy. When asked what Joe would be learning in his internship, he responded, “Everything! In three months, he’ll probably know enough to teach a class.” Joe is fast on his way to becoming a web developer.

Chris Webber, another graduate of the beginners’ web course and the WordPress course, found a position working for Zach Arnold, a local developer. Chris Webber was a former gunsmith before an injury took him off the job, and a member of Navy special forces before that. Six months previously, he had no web development experience but has definitely taken to it. “Landing on something that I feel I’m good at and that I enjoy doing was one in a million to me,” he said.

### **Who should take Cloud Wise Academy courses?**

What all these success stories have in common is that they involve talented, hardworking people, who did not have confidence in their ability to fit into a 21st-century economy. It is no secret that the web has greatly altered the very nature of business itself. Web skills have become immensely valuable, but at the same time, not all of these skills necessarily need to be taught at a university. Cloud Wise Academy is built around the proposition that everything a person needs to make money in web development can be taught in a few months.

What these courses do not necessarily require is a lot of resources. Anyone who is willing to work and learn should be able to take Cloud Wise Academy courses - and they can! Our numerous donors, including the Shasta Regional Community Foundation, have allowed to offer generous scholarships to individuals without many resources. Interested parties can apply for the scholarship by following our instructions on [this page](#).