We live in a world that is rapidly utilizing computers to improve every facet of life. Computer code, the language that computers communicate with, has become a skill of equal importance to standard school subjects like science, math, history, or writing.

Coding enables us to discover, innovate, and revolutionize in fields ranging from fluid mechanics to archeology. Coding also teaches us to think algorithmically to develop precise steps to solve problems faster. For all of these reasons, companies in every industry rely on computers to power their business, and are increasingly expecting their employees to be proficient with them. When we consider the realities of the 21st century, it is abundantly clear that coding has become a skill critical for every child to learn.

While there are existing initiatives to make it easier to learn to code, many students lack access to a device capable of running the tools they need to succeed. Nearly 1 in 2 American families below the poverty level either have no personal way to access the internet, or can only do so with a mobile device. That amounts to millions of American students without a path to become familiar with today’s increasingly important digital tools. For many of these students, it can even disable them from completing parts of their homework.

We thought this was unacceptable; when we learned that the equivalent of 35 Willis Towers (7 Million Tons) of usable electronics are thrown out every year in the U.S., we knew we had to do something about it.

So, we created BinaryHeart, a student organization dedicated to empowering the next generation of innovators.

We collect broken or no longer needed devices and breathe new life into them. By swapping out parts from the various devices we collect, we can fix damaged devices, and find uses for irreparably broken devices. After being repaired, we donate the devices to impoverished students and families through Northwestern Settlement.

Through this process, we can provide crucial digital tools to help underprivileged youth, and also save good devices from rotting away in landfills. We accept laptops, desktops, iPads, keyboards, mice, monitors, and cables. We can generally only utilize devices up to 10 years old, however, we occasionally make exceptions.

Donations can be dropped off at New Trier High School on Wednesdays between 3:30 and 5pm by the main entrance on Winnetka Ave. Additionally, we offer free device pick-ups that can be arranged by filling out a form on our website, binaryheart.org. Any questions can be emailed to contact@binaryheart.org.

If you don’t have a device to donate, you can also support us through our website to help us buy parts and tools. We also have key chains and nametags made from computer parts that are available for purchase on our website, and help support our club.

With your help, we can fulfill our mission to spread digital access.

Marzuk Rashid is the president and co-founder of BinaryHeart. A junior at New Trier High School, he started coding in the second grade.