

# VIRTUAL

## Hacks for Humanity 2020 Report



### Overview and Context

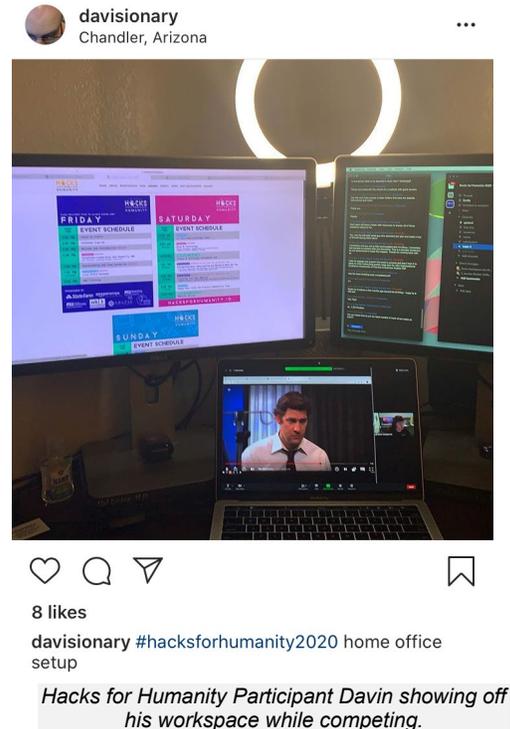
Because of COVID-19 challenges and uncertainties, ASU Project Humanities' seventh annual **Hacks for Humanity: Hacking for the Social Good** pivoted to a totally virtual/online format. As in previous six hackathons, this event once again drew participants from different professions, ages, communities, backgrounds and this year--because of virtual format--participants from **4 states within the USA** and from **14 countries**. Our typically two-day event became a three-day virtual event where participants as randomly assembled teams (vs. prearranged teams) collaborated to create solutions to big social challenges. While COVID-19 precautions and concerns forced this new format for us, this popular event--even in the virtual format--still engaged Project Humanities' supporters--veteran and new supporters--in *talking, listening* and *connecting*. This event took place on Friday evening, Saturday, and Sunday afternoon (9, 10, 11 October 2020).

Too often, those not in the technology world see hacking as a coding-only activity. Those not in the coding world see hacking as an act of privacy violation. This event annually challenges this singular thinking and welcomes coders, non-coders, designers, experienced and budding entrepreneurs, business folks, engineers, artists, humanists, futurists and everyone in between. Here was an opportunity for cross-generational interactions, networking and community-building. Like life hacks, camping hacks, beauty hacks, cleaning hacks and other such creative innovations, this event is about building something to make something better and is premised on the notion that true creativity and innovation result from collaboration along many lines of "difference."

What makes this hacking event unique is the wide audience welcomed and the fact that teams are not pre-assembled nor challenges prescribed. Additionally, all team products embodied in concept and application three of these seven principles in Project Humanities' Humanity 101 Movement—*empathy, compassion, respect, integrity, forgiveness, kindness* and *self-reflection*. Team tracks this year responded to what's happening

in the world now regarding COVID-19 and this current crisis in racial justice. The tracks were: **Ageing, Safety and Justice**.

Since the mid-March pivot from in-person events to virtual, Project Humanities had continued to deliver new programming via its summer Podcast Club community conversation that included such topics as Black parenting and corporal punishment, death and dying, menstrual equity, youth mental health and academic pressures, and police departments discarding rape kits. These virtual facilitated conversations engaged attendees, facilitators and panelists from across the country and the globe to join. Rachel Sondgeroth, Project Humanities Program Coordinator, who manages events technology, commented on our new virtual delivery format: “Our shift to virtual programming has challenged us to find ways to keep events engaging from afar. We're grateful for this opportunity to expand the methods of our programming and we're excited to see what fresh, new ideas come from it.”



2017 hackathon event participant, Mohit Doshi, ASU computer science major, describes his experience: *“Hacks for Humanity 2017 was my first hackathon ever. I was a freshman and my experience with Hacks for Humanity led me to pursue many more hackathons and compete in events across the state and country. I formed a team with four other people who I had never met before. All of us were from different backgrounds. Each person contributed something to the project that was unique to their background. There were programmers, a Language major, a business major. I liked how everyone’s contributions culminated to create something that was not only a new idea but also implementable.”* Doshi participated again this year virtually as did at least two other previous attendees--one from Ghana who was visiting the USA when he attended last year, and the other an Arizona State University staff member. That attendees return for this event is a sign of the positive impact and engagement of our efforts.

This free **Hacks for Humanity** event was open to high school juniors and seniors to retirees. Participants worked on teams, innovated ambitious projects, played games, created websites, completed mentor-approved canvas business models, heard critical presentations on entrepreneurship myths and misconceptions and on bias in technologies, won \$10k in cash prizes, and most of all, had fun for a good cause. By all measures, the feedback and data reveal that this first virtual hacking event was a success.

**Team Participants (59)**

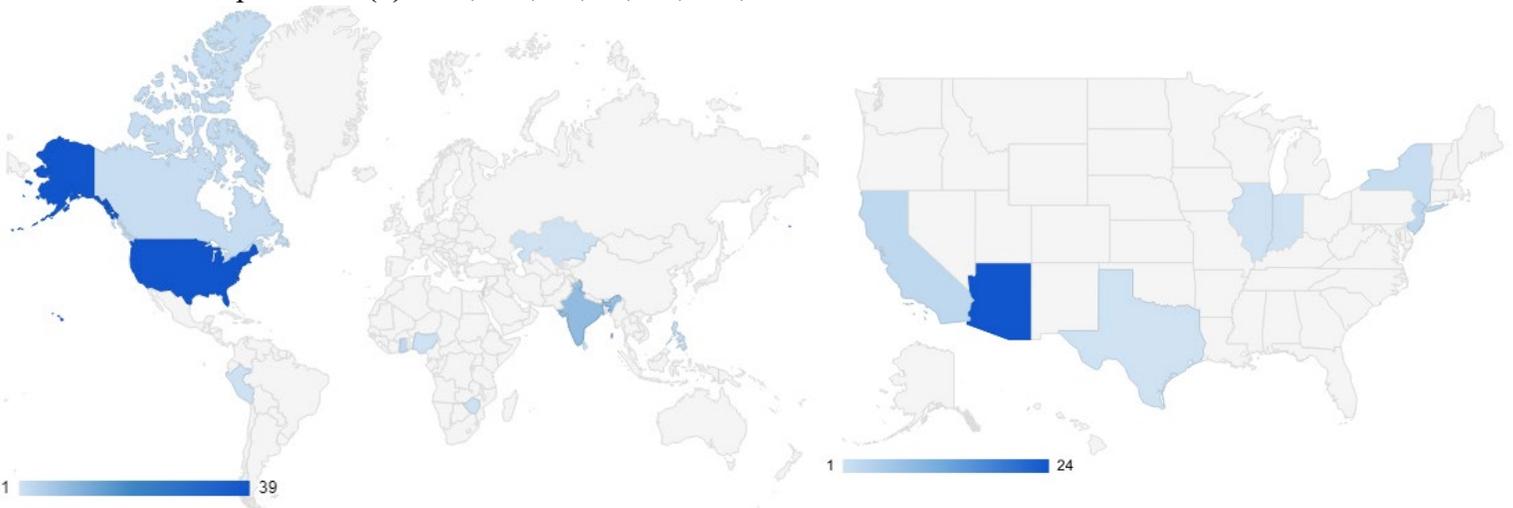
**Locations**

This year’s virtual Hacks for Humanity brought participants, mentors, and volunteers from around the globe.

**Countries represented (14):**

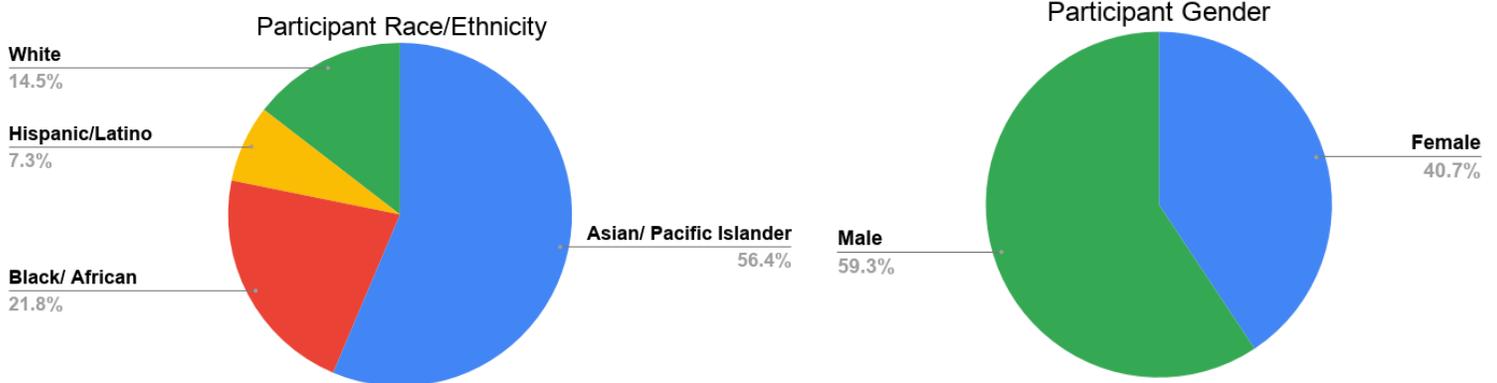
- *Team Participants:* Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Perú, Nigeria, Kazakhstan, Israel, India, Ghana, Canada, United States, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Pakistan
- *Mentors & Volunteers:* Nigeria, Pakistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Philippines

**USA states represented (6): AZ, CA, IN, IL, NJ, TX**



**Demographics**

The international nature of this event also increased its overall diversity. This year, we saw a 3% increase in Hispanic/Latinx participation, a 5.8% increase in Black/African participation compared to last year’s event.



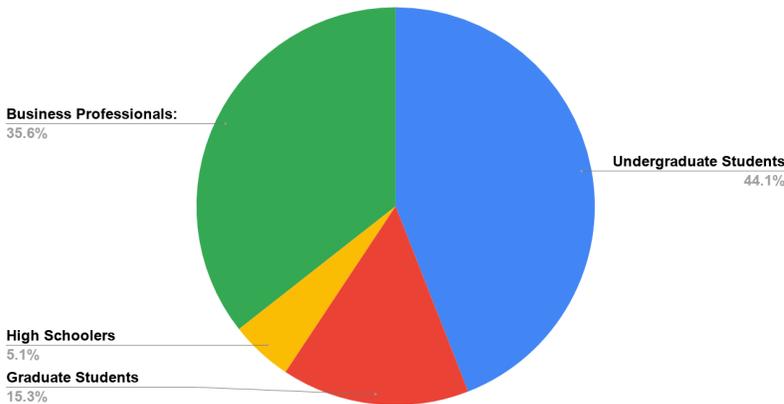
## Education & Expertise

- Undergraduate students: 26
- Graduate students: 9
- High schoolers: 3
- Business professionals: 21

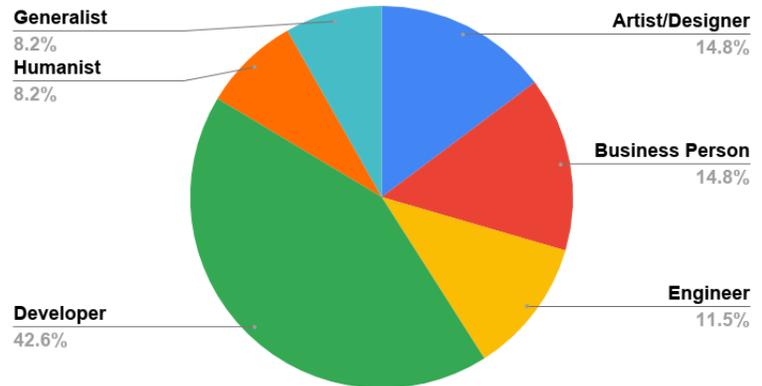
## Interests & Affiliations

- *High school students represented:* Ort Kramim Karmiel (**Israel**), Akinyosoye Model College (**Nigeria**)
- *Undergraduate and graduate students represented:* Arizona State University, Chandler Gilbert Community College, University of Illinois at Chicago, San Francisco State University, New York University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Vellore Institute of Technology (**India**), Virgen Milagrosa University Foundation (**Philippines**), University of Central Lancashire (England), Sheridan College (**Canada**), People's Education Society (**India**), University Krishna Institute of Engineering & Technology (**India**), Jaypee Institute Of Information Technology (**India**), Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Technical University (**India**), Universidad Tecnológica del Perú (**Peru**)
- *Community professionals included:* software engineers, developers, Chief Culture Officer at ASU's University Technology Office, Meeting Arranger for MLA, Business Analyst for ASU Knowledge Enterprise, Executive Director of Halifax PLAYS, Social Worker from Council of International Programs

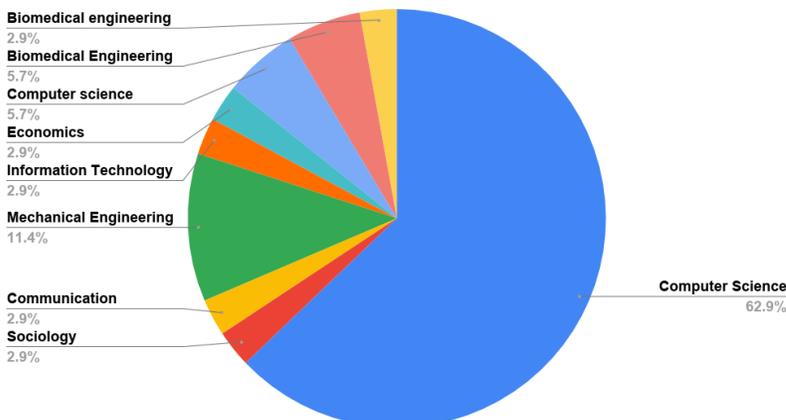
Participant Education / Experience Levels



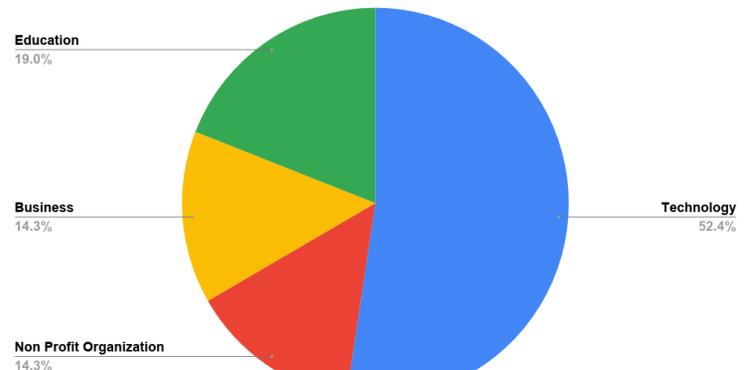
Role/Expertise



Majors



Industries of Participating Business Professionals



## Mentors (42)

Mentors are individuals who commit to a minimum of 2-hour blocks wherein they test teams' ideas and offer guidance. Mentors are anyone interested in utilizing their expertise to help teams spark creativity, generate ideas, problem solve, and develop final presentations. Mentors are scheduled according to their expertise and assist participants with submitting on time quality work for deadlines. Team participants were required to show both their Business Model Canvas and Challenge Statement and their Website Homepage to two mentors and run their pitch by a panel of mentors for feedback and approval before presenting their live pitches to final competition judges. Fortunately, we had mentors from all diverse fields, which provided well-rounded perspectives for teams.

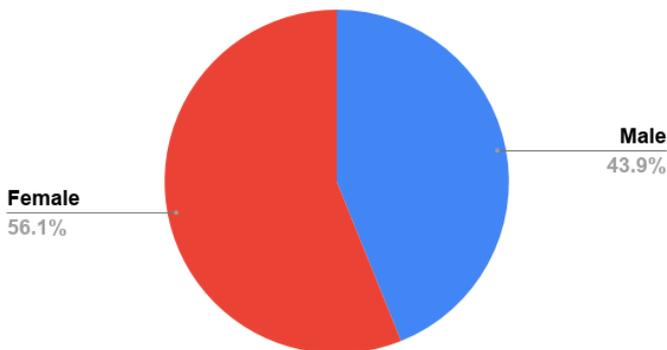


Zoom selfie of State Farm mentors from live pitching practice.

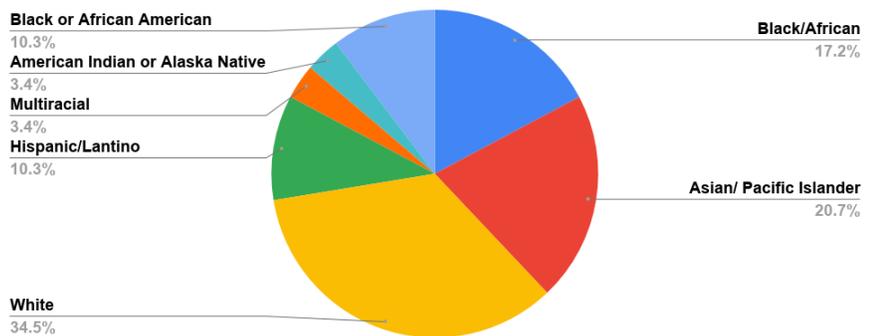
Once again this year, Hacks for Humanity was fortunate to count among its mentors State Farm employees. State Farm employees provided feedback to teams' live pitches prior to the final judging. This invaluable experience gave teams the opportunity to fine tune their pitches.

Additionally, we had mentors from Amazon Tempe, ASU Smart City Cloud Innovation Center, ASU J. Orin Edson Entrepreneurship and Innovation Institute, PayPal and more.

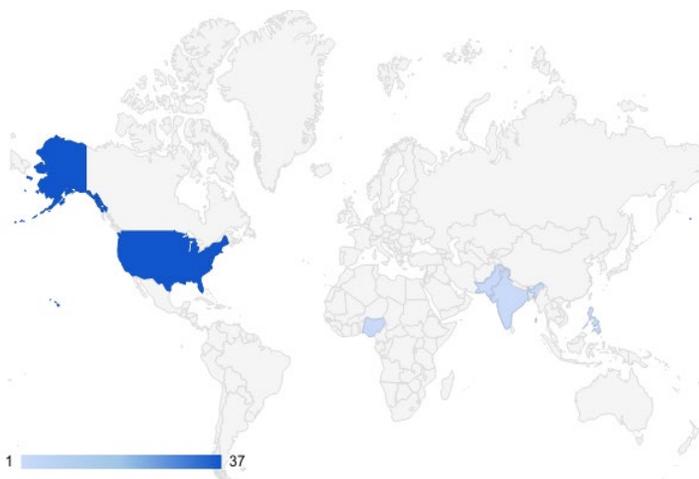
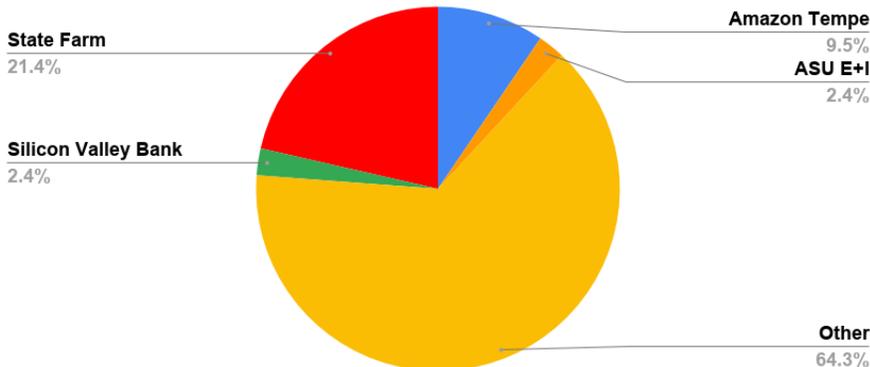
Mentor Genders



Mentor Race/Ethnicity

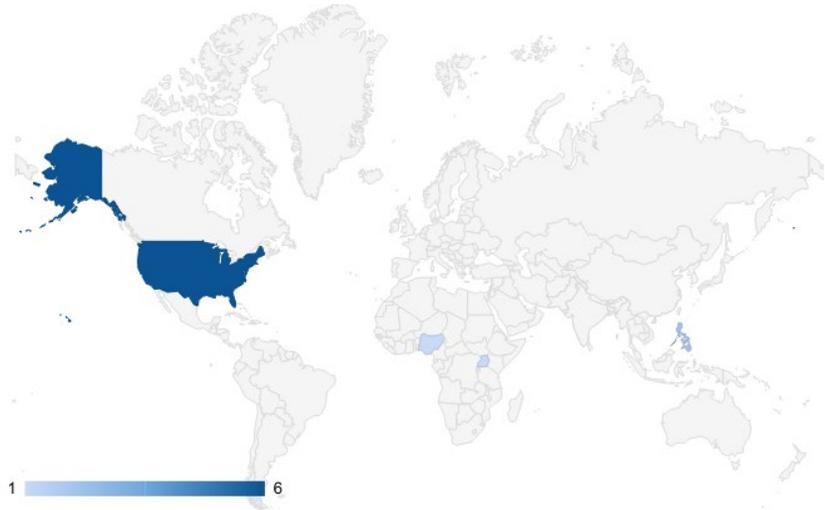
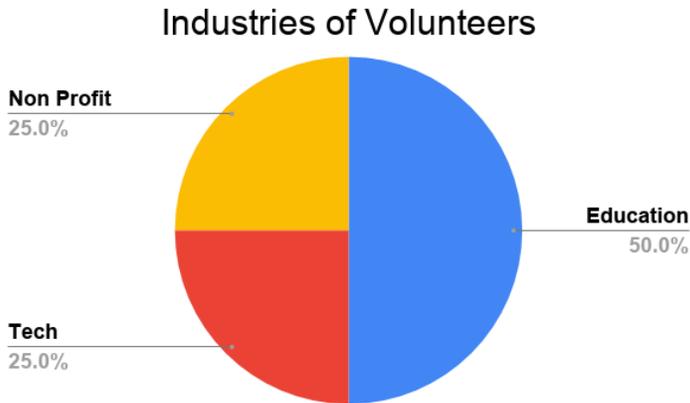
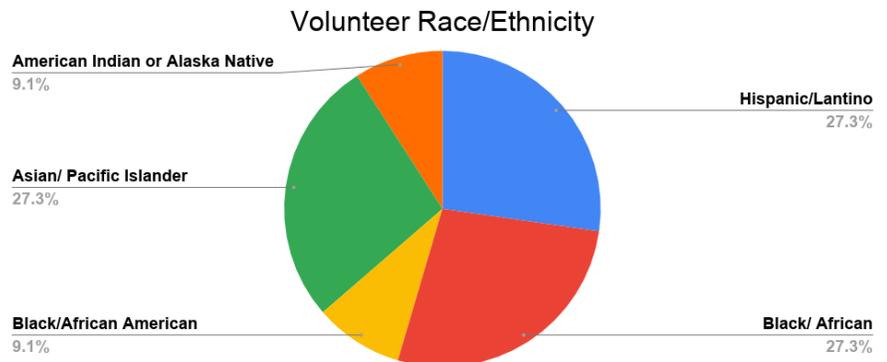
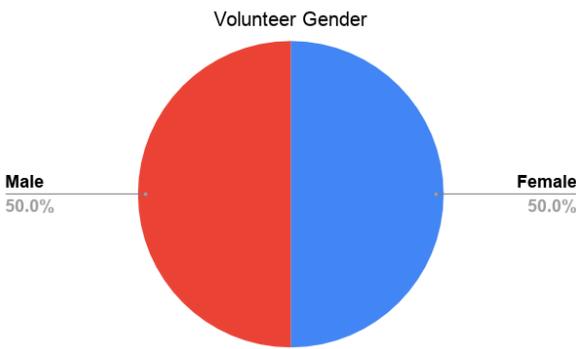


Mentor Affiliations



**Volunteers (10)**

Volunteers are individuals who sign up in 2-hour blocks to assist in areas of event logistics and implementation. Due to the virtual nature of this year’s hacking event, volunteers no longer needed to assist with responsibilities such as event setup or cleanup, but rather helped staff facilitate virtual activities and games, verified team submissions, and monitored the Slack Help Line. This year, our hackathon counted among its volunteer’s coders, STEM educators, leaders of nonprofits, and designers from countries such as **Nigeria, Uganda, the Philippines** and the **USA**.



**Judges (4)** - Judges' locations included **Arizona** and **Massachusetts**.

- **Har Rai Khalsa** is the CEO and Co-founder of MK Decision, a digital account opening and loan origination platform. Har Rai is an accomplished business leader with 12+ years of experience as a FinTech executive. At MK Decision, he oversees Marketing, Sales, Product Management, and Product Design.
- **Melissa Tse** is a Senior Manager and Head of Venture Investments for Avery Dennison, where she manages corporate venture capital portfolios. Prior to Avery Dennison, Melissa spent most of her career in various corporate development and strategy roles, focusing on M & A and corporate strategy for financial services.
- **Steven VanKlompberg** is a credit and risk manager for JPMorgan Chase and has been in the industry for more than 30 years in a variety of roles and locations. He has extensive experience in new business development and sales, special credits, account management, and employee management.
- **Lexie Gilbert** is a doctoral student in Linguistics & Applied Linguistics and a Teaching Associate with the Writing Programs at Arizona State University. Her work disentangles discourses of authenticity surrounding, engulfing, and shaping legible transgender and transsexual subjects in the US. Lexie's recent and ongoing projects include an examination of police justification of violence in official *Use of Force* reports and an investigation of popular discourses surrounding trans childhoods with an emphasis on the question of agency.

**Sponsors (7)**

- State Farm
- Silicon Valley Bank
- Come Rain or Shine Foundation
- Amazon Tempe
- ASU Smart City Cloud Innovation Center
- ASU J. Orin Edson Entrepreneurship and Innovation Institute
- Celtic Property Management

**Supporters (5)**

- Independent News Media
- ASU University Technology Office
- PayPal
- Canvas
- Arizona Informant

## **Selected Event Feedback**

“I still really like the focus on humanity and cross-focus and collaboration. Also the lessons on diversity and inclusion were wonderful.”

“I think pairing everyone in different groups was pretty great. Not only does it allow everyone to meet new people, but it really shifts the focus of the hackathon to actually building real solutions.”

“I liked randomly assigned teams. Also, the zoom rooms being modeled after tables and classrooms is really handy, and the Tinyurls are useful!”

“This event is very unique because it welcomes everyone--both coders and non-coders.”

“I liked that it centered on bringing people from all industries together.”

“I liked communicating with new people to fix a problem.”

“I liked the application of Humanity principles on the products.”

“Having random teams was a good aspect. I think it is helpful for people in that it challenges them to go out of their comfort zones.”

“I liked that this was an international competition where everyone from anywhere with any background could participate.”

“Firstly, thank you for creating and organizing such a wonderful event. I really appreciated the focus on diversity of thought, representation and work. As someone newly entering the world of product design, I've been learning about bias in technology so having a session devoted to that was really wonderful. Also your staff were all really lovely, kind and helpful and it was so great to have the opportunity to work with mentors.”

“I'm glad I was able to help out the various students and community members who took part in the weekend. I really enjoyed my experience with the program and hope I can help out in the future. The teams and their ideas were great and I'm hoping to get one of them to do the Venture Devils program.”

“It was a wonderful way to connect to people who want to make a difference.”

“[Even though I am a high schooler,] I most definitely felt that my ideas and skills were valued and my teammates were really nice.”

“Randomly assigned teams are great because you get to befriend a bunch of different people.”

“Liked the chance to work with strangers. Slack was super helpful, and the mentorship sessions were good overall (some great feedback!). The team was super accommodating and worked so hard, so big thanks for that. Overall, I had fun--which is the main thing.”

“I loved the Happy Hour” and the energy as well as the intimacy. I also loved the structure of the event.”

“[I liked the] mentors from State Farm!”

“I had fun and learned a lot about the idea/pitch process. And also learned to try to be aware of unintentional biases throughout the process.”

“This was my first [hackathon]” experience and it was awesome.

“Keep changing the world with this hackathon.”

“I am coming again next year.”

“Great event. Will do again.”

“Thank you so much for this unique experience. I hope you can bring this event to Asia, to have more Asian participants like me.”

## **Sessions, Workshops, and Participant Engagement Activities**

*Icebreaker:* Live Pitch Karaoke

*Opening Plenary:* State Farm--“Corporate Leadership & Humanity 101: A Viable Business Model?”

Keynoter **Karl Cardenas** is a Technology Manager for State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Companies. His primary role is advancing Public Cloud platform architecture, evaluating new technologies, vendor products, and general cloud-related consulting. Other duties include creating a strong internal developer community related to public cloud platforms and evangelizing the consumption of public cloud platforms at State Farm.

*Workshop:* “Amazon Web Services Training”

Facilitator **Gurmit S. Ghatore** is a Certified Cloud Practitioner and Solution Architect

Co-facilitator **Morteza Kiadi** is a Certified Solution Architect and Machine Learning

*Plenary: “Bias and Technology”*

Keynoter **Professor Miguel Fernandez** is Composition and Literature faculty and Faculty Liaison for Student Veterans at Chandler-Gilbert Community College, in Arizona. He has received several teaching awards, including the 2012 Gilbert Chamber of Commerce Community College Educator of the Year, a 2013 League of Innovation’s Roueche Excellence Award, and recipient of the 2015 Maricopa Community Colleges Foundation Recognition Award for his work with student veterans. He graduated from Valley Leadership Institute, Class 38. He teaches freshman composition with a focus on OSR/OSINT research techniques to detect and decipher bias and fake news. He is a 2019 ISPPF Fellow and a 2019-2020 Maricopa Institute of Learning Research Fellow, focusing on credibility literacy.

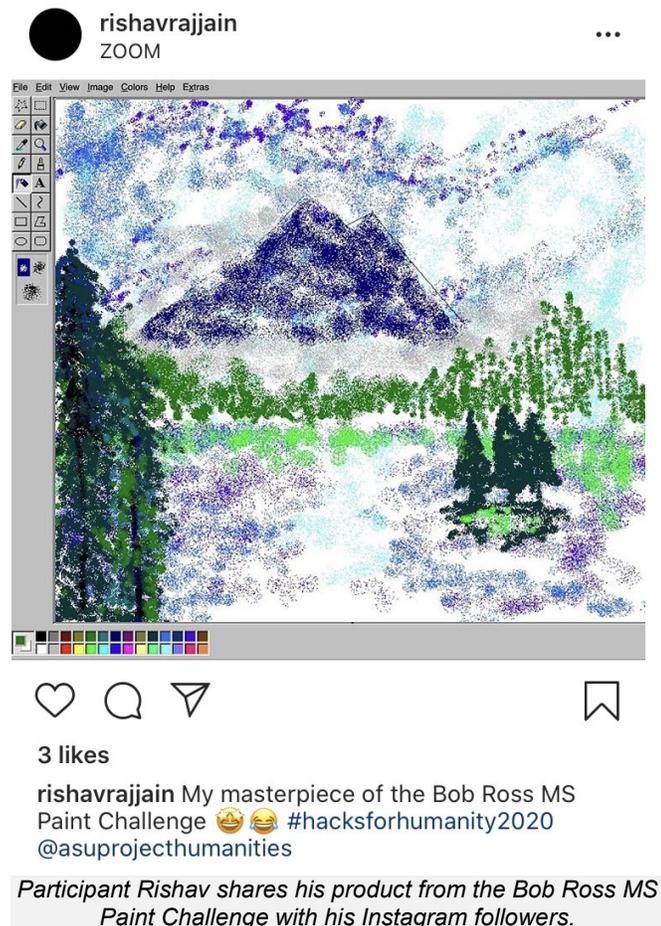
*Workshop: “Entrepreneurship: Myth-busting and Making It Work for You”*

Facilitator **Ji Mi Choi** is an associate vice president at Arizona State University advancing entrepreneurship and innovation, leveraging her 25+ years of expertise in higher education at the intersection of entrepreneurial and public-private partnerships. She has served at New York University, including leading a merger of what is now the engineering school of NYU and the development of strategic initiatives including the launch of several startup incubators. A New Yorker by way of Seoul and an avid internationalist, Ji Mi has also served in leadership roles for Columbia University, the United Nations, and numerous start-ups—not-for-profit and for profit.

*Workshop: “Creating Your Own Website”*

Facilitator **Sid Paralkar** is a Program Coordinator at Zero Waste at Arizona State University, where he oversees the operations of all the recycling programs at ASU. He is an ASU alum, having completed his master’s degree in Sustainable Solutions in 2016. After graduation, he continued to work in the field of sustainable development in various roles and capacities before he started working at ASU earlier this year. Sid has volunteered in the past few editions of Hacks for Humanity and is joining this year as tech support. Sid has an undergraduate Bachelor’s in engineering.

*Participant Engagement Activities:* In Your Home Scavenger Hunt (Saturday morning), Virtual Happy Hour (early Saturday evening), Bob Ross Painting Challenge (Sunday midnight), Breakfast Show-and-Tell (Sunday morning)



## Team Competition Results

### 1st Place:

#### Team 11 - Whole Heart

Product helps potential victims identify if their relationship is abusive, connect them to the appropriate services, provide ongoing support, and the ability to record abusive incidents in the form of a journal. The solution looks to empower victims to recognize when they are in an abusive situation and seek support services. They are at the heart of everything we do and we seek to support them through *Humanity 101 Principles* such as endless **compassion, kindness, respect, and empathy**. On the other side of abuse, we still want to support victims through self-**forgiveness** and **self-reflection**.

### 2nd Place:

#### Team 15 - Night Light

An app where users can plan what happens after “what if” by using the app before they head out, set their emergency contacts and the duration they expect to be out for, and a plan for their emergency contacts to be contacted in case an emergency happens. This product depends on social networks of people who want each other to be safe. In this sense, the app and its users amplify the *Humanity 101 principles* of **compassion, empathy, and respect**.

### 3rd Place (tie):

#### Team 8 - Elder Aid

A one-stop-shop for older adults to find resources and benefits based on the information they input into the app. streamline finding and claiming eligible funds based on user input. The app also has a feature automated the filling out of “End of Life” documents easier by au like Last will and Testament, Trust, Power of Attorney, Healthcare Power of Attorney, Living will, HIPAA release and Letter of Intent which require repetitive information. The *Humanity 101 principles* used are **respect** because it helps older adults be self-reliant, **empathy** because its informational videos will help visitors learn about challenges facing older adults and **compassion** because the app itself is a product of **compassion** for older people.

### 3rd Place (tie):

#### Team 2 - Good Neighbors

An app that facilitates volunteer food delivery services for people in vulnerable communities such as older adults and immunocompromised people. The app also features Google Home support, so it can be accessible to a wider range of the population who do not possess visual or literacy skills. The *Humanity 101 principles* of **respect, kindness, empathy, and compassion** are demonstrated and will be amplified by this app because it encourages people of all ages to work with each other to create a better community for the aging population. It works to recognize some of the challenges people may be facing in a certain community, and others in that community, out of their own volition, will be able to take action that will help to solve or alleviate those issues.

## Program Recordings

Recordings of all virtual sessions can be found here:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/hciai6mbeg187tl/AACZp0iJ30\\_h502rhMwApyuea?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/hciai6mbeg187tl/AACZp0iJ30_h502rhMwApyuea?dl=0)

## Media Coverage

- *Ahwatukee Foothills News*
  - “Ahwatukee prof’s ‘hackathon’ slated this weekend,” print newspaper article, 10/7/20
  - [Ahwatukee prof’s ‘hackathon’ slated this weekend](#) (8 October 2020)
- Independent News Media
  - *Project Humanities’ 7th annual Hacks for Humanity goes virtual*  
<https://www.yourvalley.net/stories/project-humanities-7th-annual-hacks-for-humanity-goes-virtual,186179>
  - *Teams set to ‘hack’ societal problems at upcoming Arizona State event*  
<https://www.yourvalley.net/stories/teams-set-to-hack-societal-problems-at-upcoming-arizona-state-event,186556>
- ASU Student Life
  - *Hacks for Humanity 2020: a virtual mash-up of tech and social change*  
<https://studentlife.asu.edu/content/hacks-humanity-2020-virtual-mash-tech-and-social-change>
- *Maricopan Newsletter*
  - *CGCC’s Coding Club participates in ASU Project Humanities’ 2020 Hacks for Humanity*
- Hacks for Humanity participant and team 7 member, Alejandro T., Chandler-Gilbert Community College and President of the Coding Club, on winning team for Website Design: [https://youtu.be/P54L-1D\\_KCM](https://youtu.be/P54L-1D_KCM)
- ASU Now
  - 7th annual Hacks for Humanity goes virtual, attracts international participation  
<https://asunow.asu.edu/20201030-7th-annual-hacks-humanity-goes-virtual-attracts-international-participation>

## Event Promotion

- ASU University Technology Office
  - myASU homepage, LinkedIn, Twitter, Slack
- ASU Institute for Humanities Research
  - Newsletter
- ASU Student Media
  - State Press website web banner, ASU Student Media Facebook page, ASU Student Media newsletter, ASU Off-Campus Students Facebook page
- ASU The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
  - Instagram
- ASU School of Computing, Informatics, and Decision Systems Engineering
  - Newsletter

- ASU Project Humanities
  - Service Saturdays homeless outreach Facebook page
- J. Orin Edson Entrepreneurship + Innovation Institute
  - Newsletter
  - LinkedIn
- Mirabella at ASU
  - Newsletter
- Chandler-Gilbert Community College
  - President's newsletter
  - CGCC Business & Computing Studies Division Facebook page
- *Arizona Informant*
  - Print newspaper advertisement (30 September 2020)
- Legitimate Matters with William Parris
  - Instagram, Facebook, Twitter
- MK Decision
  - Facebook
- PayPal
- Jews for Justice
- Arizona Asian Chamber of Commerce
- Community calendars
  - Patch.com
  - Events.com
- Press Release
  - *Ahwatukee Foothills News*
  - *Arizona Informant*
  - *Arizona Horizon*
  - KJZZ
  - Floyd Galloway Show
  - Arizona Jews for Justice
  - *Tucson Sentinel*
  - ASU Student Life
  - University of Arizona Humanities Department
  - Contributors to Dr. Neal Lester's global social justice volume