Name and address of chapter:

    Michigan State University, Women in Computing

    428 S Shaw Ln, Room 3201, East Lansing, MI 48824

Names and email addresses of chapter officers and faculty sponsors:

- Amber Benton, bentonam@msu.edu – Co-advisor
- Laura Dillon, ldillon@cse.msu.edu – Co-advisor
- Neha Gupta, guptane6@msu.edu – President
- Meghan Huynh, huynhmeg@msu.edu – Vice President
- Lauren Kelley, kelle126@msu.edu – Corporate Relations
- Courtney Irwin, irwincou@msu.edu – Treasurer
- Lauren Allswede, allswed8@msu.edu – Secretary
- Sarah Fillwock, fillwoc2@msu.edu – Community Relations
- Lama Aboubakr, aboubakr@msu.edu – Community Relations
- Halle Dymowski, dymowsk3@msu.edu – Outreach
- Nicole Lawrence, lawre272@msu.edu – Webmaster

A brief description of your chapter and school including number of chapter members:

Michigan State University Women in Computing (MSU WIC) is an organization of about 40 students and faculty (both men and women) who work to recruit, support and retain women in computing fields. We host many events during the semester, including tech talks from visiting companies, Girls Scout workshops, web development workshops and more.

Number of students with computer science and related majors:

Michigan State University has about 350 undergraduate computer science students, 200 undergraduate computer engineering students, and 100 masters and doctoral students. MSU WIC members are mainly computer science, computer engineering and media and information students.

URL for chapter home page:

http://www.cse.msu.edu/msuwic/

Essay Community Service:

Michigan State University Women in Computing (MSU WIC) believes it is not only important to create opportunities for its members to learn and grow in the field of computer science, but also to reach out and expand the knowledge of computing in the community. Many secondary schools do not expose students to the field of computing. This lack of exposure combined with social stereotypes leads to misconceptions about what computer science really is and negatively affects students' perceptions of their capabilities. Members of MSU WIC are very passionate about inspiring the next generation of girls and underrepresented minorities with the goals of instilling a growth mindset in students and a newfound confidence in their capabilities.

To achieve these goals, MSU WIC has participated in a number of community outreach programs. One of these, a Google initiative called Ignite CS, supports college students who want to make a difference in their local communities. Through this program, MSU WIC students organize after school computing clubs for high schools and public libraries in the area. These clubs engage young people in activities that promote computer science and technical thinking by providing a mentally challenging curriculum that is fun and achievable. The program also provides a diverse group of MSU student mentors for girls and minorities to look to as examples of someone like them pursuing college degrees in technical fields. The mentors share information about their college experience, discuss career opportunities available in computing, and stress the creative and problem solving nature of the field. After school clubs meet once a week for two hours. Lessons consist of exercises to develop spatial reasoning skills, as well as web development, and Python projects. The informal and open nature of the clubs helps to close the gap between students' perceptions of college and technical degrees and the reality of their opportunities. The program also stresses the importance of teamwork and communication skills.

In addition to the school clubs, MSU WIC hosted two 5-hour technology workshops this year. For one of these workshops, MSU students went to a local underserved middle school and led 30 middle school girls through activities that emphasized team building, logic skills, and programming. For the other, around 30 middle school students visited MSU and learned fundamentals of programming through fun and engaging activities.

MSU WIC has also been active in outreach initiatives hosted by MSU's Engineering College. For example, WIC led two sessions at the College's Introduce a Girl to Engineering event where around 300 middle school girls participated in different engineering related activities; we led activities at MSU's Girl Scout STEM day, to introduce even younger girls to engineering; and we hosted and spoke at several events for the national Hour of Code initiative.

These and other outreach activities have impacted our local community by increasing interest in computing among girls and minority students and also increasing their confidence in their ability to learn.