

**Paul Munger Conference for Youth-Serving Professionals**  
**Indiana University School of Education**  
<http://munger.indiana.edu/>

**June 19 -21, 2006**

**Session Title:** *Demystifying and Degeekifying Computing Careers*

**Date:** June 22, 9:15 – 10:30 a.m.

**Proposal Summary**

Computing has long been equated with programming. Computer scientists have long been portrayed as socially-challenged nerds and their work as dreary and highly technical. The Women in Computing group at Indiana University has created *Just Be*, a K-12 outreach program designed to dispel this “geek myth”, challenge students’ ideas about gender-appropriate careers, and expose the social nature of computing and its tremendous positive impact on the lives of real people.

*Just Be* is a free, interactive, traveling show presented by students in IU’s School of Informatics to middle and high school students. Audience members use remote-control clickers to vote on fun polls that confront stereotypes and persuade subtly that the study of computing, and the ensuing jobs, involves creativity, social interaction, and broad skills. *Just Be* shows youngsters that computing careers are not the exclusive domains of men – and that those entering such fields are not just pocket-protector wearing geeks.

This workshop will define the computing disciplines, identify the preparation needed to embark on various computing careers, describe the need for racial and gender diversity, and run the full 45-minute interactive show as it is presented to high school students. Our goal is to open a window for participants to glimpse the rich academic and professional field that is computer science. Those interested in bringing *Just Be* to their schools can register at the workshop or complete our online interest form:

<http://www.cs.indiana.edu/cgi-pub/wic/outreach/index.php>

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**Brief Biographical Statement of Presenters for Program**

Katie Siek PhD, 2006 graduate of Computer Science at Indiana University (IU), conducts research in medical informatics and mobile computing, is a founding member of WIC (Women in Computing) and co-creator of *Just Be*.

Jennifer Franko, Mathematics PhD student at IU, researches quantum computing and knot theory, is a WIC member and *Just Be* presenter.

Suzanne Menzel, Senior Lecturer in CS at IU and WIC steering committee member, is the *Just Be* faculty advisor.

