



# Miami for Everyone shines a light on tech & community

BY KRYSTEN BRELLA

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The event brought together 120+ community members to learn about tech & innovation and 41 hackers to compete in the inaugural hackathon

By Krysten Brenlla

As Miami continues to grow as a tech ecosystem for both locals and guests alike, so does inclusivity and education – at least, that's what we're striving for.

Dubbed as “the tech event for everyone,” Miami for Everyone, launched by City of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez’s Venture Miami team, was the inaugural three-day event for Miamians, both newbies or masters in tech, to come together and learn while working to create solutions around local challenges Miami faces daily.

“During Miami Tech Month, we received a lot of feedback from the community wanting to feel more connected with the #MiamiTech movement, so we hosted a series of open conversations at City Hall to determine how Venture Miami could help,” said Erick Gavin, Executive Director of Venture Miami, and organizer of Miami for Everyone. “The community needed an inclusive event where all Miamians would feel welcome to participate – so we created Miami for Everyone.”

The conference, held at Miami Dade College’s Wolfson Campus, attracted 120 of Miami’s tech and innovation enthusiasts that were ready to learn through workshops that touched on helpful tech and innovation topics, including: how to build a technical resume, led by Miami-based startup Bootup; how to use bitcoin for creatives and small businesses, led by BitMiami; NFT licensing tips, led by Jessica Neer McDonald of Neer McD PLLC; understanding web3, led by Megan Fitzpatrick of Web3 Equity; setting up a crypto wallet and digital identity, led by unstoppable domains; leveraging your online presence to transition into tech, led by Carla Durandisse; mastering the “growth” mindset, led by Haitians in Tech; and how to break into the tech/SaaS sales industry, led by Javier Ramirez, founder of Cuota. “Last year, Miami Hack Week was attended mostly by professionals and other individuals in the industry. But this year, we wanted to provide interested students the opportunity to participate in Miami Hack Week through the Hack@Campus platform,” said Villa-Garcia. “With help from UPE, FIU, and Miami Dade College, Hack@Campus was organized for students to show off what they’re capable of alongside industry professionals, coders, and hackers.”



*A workshop during Miami for Everyone*

And, it wouldn’t be a tech conference without an impressive Hackathon lineup with a grand prize of \$10,000 – 41 hackers submitted 17 total projects to improve challenges Miamians are facing, such as finding and securing new jobs; filling unused office spaces for coworking spaces; learning code – and much more.



*Hackathon team at work during Miami for Everyone.*

FIU student Zachary Santana. He and his team are pictured at top of post of this post. Photography: Jose Hernandez

Genesis Guardado joined up with teammates Cassandra de la Cruz-Munoz, a UX/UX expert, Adrian Valdés Díaz, a freelance web developer, and Kennashka DeSilva, the team's blockchain expert, on Day 1 of Hack Week. Guardado recently changed her major to computer science at Miami Dade College and, she says, "I have been having so much fun since! I am so grateful to be here and have this opportunity to have an impact on the future through technology."

#### **AND THE HACKATHON WINNERS ARE...**

**1st Place: The Hive 305** - <https://youtu.be/IM2xxt4yt-s>

Team Members: Muntaser Syed, Fernando Narbona, Howard Gil (pictured at top of post)

What it is: The Hive 305 is an online website and tool that allows users to find the tech jobs, events, or workshops they are looking for using specific, tailored tags on their profile pages/accounts. Drawing inspiration from our very own Refresh Miami website and The Chain, a web3 community that texts members about upcoming events, The Hive 305 makes it easy for the community to stay in-the-know about happenings in Miami Tech.

"Users can set their interests and receive a text message whenever events, jobs, news, or resources are added that match their interests, like a real-time newsletter that you've curated for yourself," said Howard Gil, a software engineer and freelancer. "Our goal was to drive community engagement – with Miami Tech exploding, we sought to connect everyone, the tech-curious and industry veterans alike, with things they would actually engage with." The way it works: The content is user-submitted or aggregated from websites such as Eventbrite, Endeavor Miami, Meetup, and Refresh Miami. To receive updates about new events or jobs the user is interested in through The Hive 305, users simply can subscribe to the individual tags that interest them to receive SMS or email notifications for new posts in real-time. Users can further refine their interests by grouping tags together, which will notify the users of content that satisfies both tags, making it easier to find what they're looking for.

The team, divided into two frontend/middleware engineers and one backend engineer, used MongoDB, GCP, Python, AWS, Vercel, Next.js, React and Chakra to create the data structures, and APIs for the jobs/events feed and the events/news submissions and notifications. The application was then coded in Visual Studio Code and managed in Github.

Why it matters: "It's very difficult to find something that works for everyone, but curated websites like Refresh Miami, and now, The Hive 305, helps you get closer to the content you want to see as opposed to searching for it yourself," said The Hive 305's frontend engineer and Miami-local Fernando Narbona, a software engineer and front-end lead at American Express. "For example, if you're a jobseeker looking for a new job, there's so much content out there to

sort through that you might get lost. Our goal was to simplify the process, in this example for both jobseekers and recruiters, by improving the search for candidates and jobs using personalized tags.”

## **2nd Place: FlexoOffice**

**Team Members: Kay Anar, Maria Lobanova, Richard Grundy, Jenny Schorsch**

<https://youtu.be/eDivwoSL8hg>

What it is: FlexoOffice is an online marketplace that connects empty office spaces with current workers or students looking for a comfortable place to spend their working days. By booking online, students and jobseekers can book empty offices or desks that are available, specifically at tech companies in Miami, to finish their work, network, and attend company-led events and workshops. Employers can then monetize empty or unused spaces while sourcing local talent – it’s a win-win situation.

The way it works: The website, built with Node.js and React frontend, includes a membership validation utility for companies to securely authenticate visitors and manage their onsite access areas. Companies can simply post their unused desks or empty office spaces on the FlexoOffice interface, and with the click of a button, FlexoOffice members book the space and head to their new office for the day.

For locals and tech lovers like Fernando and his team, an application like The Hive 305 introduces the community to more events, workshops, and programs that are tailored for what each specific user is looking for. It’s a chance to meet new people and share their experiences and love for tech, together.

**3rd Place: JoinTech** - [https://youtu.be/STykn7\\_WMxw](https://youtu.be/STykn7_WMxw)

**Team Members:** Gonzalo Casas de las Penas, Miguel de Leon, Giovanni Labrador, Dominic Martinez

What it is: JoinTech is an online tool that allows users to find a job, learn new skills and get PAID with MiamiCoin – interested yet?

Using the JoinTech online interface, learners can find new jobs and projects posted by local businesses by choosing a specific path they’re interested in, such as web development, application development, artificial intelligence, or blockchain. Mentors in these specific areas are then matched with the student/learner, and both are paid with MiamiCoin.

The way it works:

Using Javascript, CSS, HTML, React, Near fungible tokens and Python, the user can upload their resume to JoinTech, which will then pull specific skills from their resume to match the user with job descriptions and projects aggregated from websites like Indeed. The user finds projects and jobs they’re interested in learning about, and then they’re matched with mentors in that space who get paid with MiamiCoin and other non-fungible tokens in the NEAR cryptocurrency wallet.

“Miami for Everyone was curated by the community for the community, so it was important for us to keep it accessible to everyone,” said Kelly Montoya, Venture Miami’s Senior Advisor for Strategic Engagement, and co-organizer of Miami for Everyone. “We plan to continue this series and tailor the content of each event to meet the needs of our Miami communities.”

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*Venture Miami team: From L to R: Kevin Ruiz, Senior Advisor, Business Development and Recruitment, Venture Miami; Nicola Demko, Advisor of Business Development and Recruitment, Venture Miami; Erick Gavin, Executive Director, Venture Miami; Kelly Montoya, Senior Advisor for Strategic Engagement, Venture Miami; and Sa’Vanna Dre’ Smith, Senior Communications & Marketing Specialist, Venture Miami.*

Read more at : <https://refreshmiami.com/miami-for-everyone-shines-a-light-on-tech-community/>