



HONDO CYBER OWLS SOAR IN 2024-2025 CYBER SEASON



This season, we proudly fielded both a high school and a middle school team in CyberPatriot XVII, the world's largest youth cybersecurity competition. With 5,050 teams from across the U.S., Canada, and Department of Defense schools worldwide, the competition was fierce—but our Cyber Owls were more than ready for the challenge.

- High School Team Achievement: Our high school team soared into the Platinum Tier, placing in the top 30% of the 2,890 Open Division teams.
- Middle School Team Achievement: Our dedicated 3-person middle school crew advanced to the Middle School Semifinals, ranking in the top 60% out of 754 teams.

These results are more than just numbers—they represent hours of teamwork, problem-solving, and persistence under pressure.

Beyond CyberPatriot – Capturing the Flag

We didn't stop when the CyberPatriot season ended. The Cyber Owls took flight into the world of Capture the Flag (CTF) competitions, tackling challenges that tested our skills in network traffic analysis, cryptography, digital forensics, and other advanced cybersecurity topics. These competitions sharpened our technical skills and prepared us for even greater achievements in future seasons.

Honoring Our Seniors

Every season has its bittersweet moments, and this year we say farewell to three incredible seniors whose leadership and spirit have shaped our team:

- Sharon “Yarn Wizard” Counselman – 4 years
- Steven “Jimothy Slimmeth” Titzman – 3 years
- Zoe “55” Zuniga – 3 years

Your legacy will live on in the Cyber Owls, and we wish you all the best in your next adventures.

With the 2025–2026 cyber season fast approaching, we're looking for new team members to join our flock. Whether you're a tech enthusiast, a puzzle solver, or simply curious about cybersecurity, there's a place for you on the Hondo Cyber Owls.

We'll be back—stronger, sharper, and ready to soar even higher—for CyberPatriot XVIII.

Cyber Like A Viking

Coach Hall



HONDO
THIS IS GOD'S COUNTRY

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"MY VISIT TO THE FBI TEEN ACADEMY HAS LEFT ME WITH A VARIETY OF PATHS TO PICK FROM AND I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE ENRICHING EXPERIENCE AND INCREDIBLE INDIVIDUALS I MET THIS YEAR"



AN ARTICLE BY OUR TEAM CAPTAIN ABOUT HER EXPERIENCE AT THE FBI TEEN CAMP

My CyberPatriot coach Fredrick Hall introduced me to the FBI Teen Academy and encouraged me to apply. I owe him a great thanks because attending the academy is probably one of the greatest things I've done in my youth.

The application process is conducted online and is fairly straightforward. It requires a transcript, drivers license, personal information about yourself and your experiences, and an essay. I wrote my essay and then I wrote it again, repeating the process until finally after two days I submitted draft number 6.

When the email titled "Congratulations" arrived, I was ecstatic. On the day of the visit to the academy, I arrived not knowing what to expect. Upon arrival, I was greeted by friendly agents and staff, Who asked if I had any devices on me. Once I confirmed I didn't, I was free to walk through the tall metal gates. As I walked through the metal detector it struck me how large the headquarters was and how deceptively small the property seemed from the outside.

There were 65 students in the conference room; all from the headquarters' area of responsibility. Introductions were in order and one by one we introduced ourselves. Who are you, what school are you from? And my favorite, which was asked later, was, "Why are you here? "

The morning began with Lectures and introductions to several genial agents and staff in the headquarters. Students were introduced and encouraged to explore the FBI Honors internship program. A competitive internship for college students interested in a career at the FBI.

The activities were fun and engaging and the speakers were knowledgeable about their respective topics. We participated in hands-on activities with the evidence response team, visited a CART vehicle (a.k.a. hacker-van), and my favorite part was visiting Bomb tech, where students were allowed to operate a robot typically used in diffusing bombs.

We were introduced to various fields within the FBI, ranging from forensic accounting to criminal profiling. Demonstrating that not everyone who works at the FBI Headquarters is an agent and yet their roles are equally important. My visit to the FBI Teen Academy has left me with a variety of paths to pick from and I am grateful for the enriching experience and incredible individuals I met this year.

This article was written by Jessica "#1" Counselman
Team Captain, Hondo Cyber Owls

HONDO CYBER OWLS AT 2025 CYBERTEXAS FOUNDATION MAYOR'S CYBER CUP

The Hondo Cyber Owls soared into the spotlight at the **2025 CyberTexas Foundation Mayor's Cyber Cup College Fair and Luncheon**, joining a celebration of cyber talent, education, and community across San Antonio.

Representing Hondo with pride, the Cyber Owls had the unique opportunity to connect with representatives from **UTSA – The University of Texas at San Antonio, St. Philip's College, Angelo State University, St. Mary's University, and Hallmark University**. In addition to exploring college pathways, the students met with cyber leaders from the **Sixteenth Air Force/Air Forces Cyber, the 67th Cyberspace Wing, and the 688th Cyberspace Wing**—an inspiring chance to see real-world military cyber operations in action.



The Hondo Cyber Owls pictured with Lt. Gen. Thomas K. Hensley is the Commander, Sixteenth Air Force; Commander, Air Forces Cyber, and Commander



The day also included an interactive visit to the **San Antonio Museum of Science and Technology's Area 21 Museum**, where the team explored cutting-edge cybersecurity exhibits. Highlights included demonstrations of historical encryption devices, hands-on hacking simulations, and an immersive look into a working Security Operations Center.

The Mayor's Cyber Cup wasn't just about learning—it was also about community. The Hondo Cyber Owls stood alongside the **Medina Valley AFJROTC TX-20009 CyberPatriot team** and other programs their coach, Frank "The Cyber Viking" Hall, mentors, including teams from **Alamo Academies, Robert G. Cole High School, CAST Tech High School, and John Jay High School**. The gathering became a reunion of sorts, bringing together students, coaches, mentors, educators, and cyber professionals from across the city.

Two standout moments made the day unforgettable:

- **Mentorship Recognition:** Coach Hall was officially named the technical mentor for **Cole High School** and **The Hackstreet Girls**—a role he accepted with pride after being honored in a heartfelt speech.
- **Epic Group Moment:** To cap off the event, Hall invited every team he had worked with over the past year on stage for a massive group "ussie" and an energetic all-hands-in cheer—a visual testament to the unity and spirit of the San Antonio cyber community.

The **CyberTexas Foundation** once again delivered an inspiring event that celebrated not only competition but also the friendships, opportunities, and shared passion for cybersecurity that unite the city's students and mentors.



The Hondo Cyber Owls pictured with teams from across the San Antonio Center of Excellence for CyberPatriot

The Hondo Cyber Owls left the Mayor's Cyber Cup with new connections, deeper inspiration, and a renewed commitment to "Cyber Like A Viking" as they prepare for the next chapter of their cyber journey.

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"MEDIA LITERACY IS CRUCIAL TO FUTURE DECISIONS, RESPONSES TO CURRENT EVENTS, AND THE EVERY-DAY USE OF TECHNOLOGY."



Hondo Cyber Owls – It's Time to Compete!

Get ready to soar into action! The official **CyberPatriot XVIII** competition dates have been released, and the Hondo Cyber Owls are preparing for an exciting new season of defending virtual networks and mastering cybersecurity skills.

 Here are the key dates for CP-XVIII:

Round 1: October 23–26, 2025

Round 2: November 13–16, 2025

State Round (Round 3) December 11–14, 2025

Semi-Finals (Round 4) (Only teams that qualify can participate) January 22–24, 2026 (3 Days only)

Make sure you've got those weekends circled on your calendars! 🦉

 Full competition schedule and details:

[CyberPatriot XVIII Official Schedule](#)



JOIN THE HONDO CYBER OWLS – FUTURE CYBER DEFENDERS WANTED!



Are you in 6th–11th grade and curious about technology, teamwork, and solving digital challenges? The Hondo Cyber Owls are looking for new recruits to join our award-winning CyberPatriot team—and it's absolutely free to join!

We meet every Saturday at the Hondo Public Library from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM, where we learn cybersecurity skills, work together to solve problems, and prepare for exciting competitions. Best of all, every competition comes with free cookies baked by our legendary Cookie Maiden!

If you're a student—or know a student—who's ready to learn, compete, and have fun, stop by one of our Saturday practices and see what the Cyber Owls are all about. Your future in cybersecurity could start here!

The Cyber Viking Syslogs My Presentation at BSides SATX 2025

On July 12, 2025, I had the privilege of speaking at BSides San Antonio, one of Texas's premier cybersecurity community events. The conference brought together professionals, students, educators, and tech enthusiasts from all over the state for a full day of presentations, workshops, and networking.

For me, it was the perfect opportunity to talk about something I care deeply about—teaching cyber safety to my CyberPatriot teams and the next generation of digital citizens.

In my presentation, I pulled back the curtain on the hidden dangers of online platforms, starting with the story of Chatroulette—a site that began as a quirky viral sensation but quickly became a cautionary tale. Its history showed how anonymity, poor moderation, and a lack of accountability created an environment ripe for inappropriate content, predatory behavior, and exploitation. But my talk wasn't just about the past—it was about what's happening right now on platforms like Roblox, Minecraft, and Discord. These can be incredible spaces for creativity, learning, and connection, but they also present real risks, including scams, cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and even predators.



One of my main objectives—both at BSides and in my role as a CyberPatriot coach—is to make sure my students not only recognize these dangers but also know what to do if they encounter them. I shared with the audience the same rule I tell my teams:

“If something happens to you online—first tell your parents, then come to me or another trusted adult. You never have to face it alone.”

I want my students to feel confident speaking up, whether it's a strange message from someone they don't know, a conversation that turns uncomfortable, or content that just doesn't seem right.

During my talk, I gave practical tips for staying safe online:

- Use privacy settings and parental controls to limit exposure to strangers.
- Watch for red flags like requests for personal information, offers that sound too good to be true, or pressure to keep secrets.
- Practice “digital street smarts” just like you would in the real world.
- Speak up early when something feels wrong.

I used real-world cases, research findings, and stories from my own CyberPatriot teams to make the point that online safety is a shared responsibility. Parents, educators, and community leaders all have a role to play, and so do the kids themselves.

In true Cyber Viking style, I kept things lively with humor, storytelling, and some surprising examples that got people talking in the hallways afterward. The feedback I received was encouraging—many attendees told me the talk was “eye-opening,” “engaging,” and “something every parent needs to hear.” At the end of the day, my mission is the same whether I'm at BSides SATX, in a high school classroom, or at a CyberPatriot practice: I want to prepare my students for more than competitions. I want them to understand the world they connect to every time they go online, to recognize the dangers that might be hiding there, and to know they have a trusted network of people ready to help.

Because in cybersecurity—and in life—the best defense starts with awareness and the courage to speak up.

“IF SOMETHING
HAPPENS
TO YOU
ONLINE—
FIRST
TELL
YOUR
PAR-
ENTS,
THEN
COME TO
ME OR
ANOTH-
ER
TRUSTED
ADULT.
YOU
NEVER
HAVE TO
FACE IT
ALONE.”



HONDO CYBER OWLS

CYBERPATRIOT TEAM

WE MONITOR NETWORKS BY SOARING THROUGH CYBERSPACE HUNTING FOR PREY. WE USE OUR TALONS AS A DETERRENT TO PROTECT OUR DATA. USING ADVANCED DETECTION TECHNIQUES, WE SPREAD OUR WINGS AND LAUNCH PRECISE COUNTER MEASURES TO DEFEND OUR NETWORKS AGAINST CYBER ENEMIES. WE FIND, CAPTURE, AND ANNIHILATE ALL CYBER THREATS. WE ARE THE CYBER OWLS!

HONDO CYBER OWLS

CYBERPATRIOT TEAM

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CHIEF EDITOR OF THE
CYBER TALON



ABOUT THE HONDO CYBERPATRIOT TEAM



The Vision

The vision of the Hondo Cyber Owls CyberPatriot program is to promote cyber awareness, computer security practices, and cyber ethics. All of these are essential attributes for creating a secure network infrastructure, teaching the students how to detect threats, and how to defend against cyber-attacks in a safe virtual environment.

The skills and knowledge the students will gain from participating in this program will give them an advantage to obtain information technology certifications, scholarships in computer related fields of study, and ultimately provide an opportunity to start a great career in information technology and cyber security.

The Mission

The mission of the Hondo Cyber Owls CyberPatriot program is the proper instruction and implementation of information technology principals and cyber security practices. All students will be taught how to use various operating systems, interconnecting network devices, and how to secure the entire infrastructure. The students will also be taught how to properly use tools and methodologies to assess and troubleshoot problems that range from inoperable workstations to misconfigured networking equipment. These are the skills that will be necessary to compete in the CyberPatriot competitions and will enable us to advance to each round and ultimately to the national finals.