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A Day At Google I/O

When you first walk in to San Francisco's Moscone Center, the first thing you notice is the pulse. It has the sort of giddy energy where everyone is just waiting for something to happen. You see popsicle vendors, giant statues of Google's android symbol, some dressed in flower-print or warped robes, some just green and original, guides holding up brown cardboard signs with multicolored lettering saying things like "I/O youth group or Science Youth Group over there" and tons of little brightly colored tuffets that look like sea urchins to sit on.

When I met up with my group, we were all pretty shy, and although we weren't best friends by the end of I/O, we got to know each other better and had many positive interactions. We took two escalators up past what appeared to be a highly superior science fair. The stations were made out of wood the color of gold, but we were too far away to see what was in them.

Finally, we arrived on what I believe was the third floor for the Youth I/O. Walking through the halls, I couldn't help thinking: I want to work here. *I want to be able to make stuff like self-driving cars and balloons that give Internet to rural places, I want to work in a fancy place like this.* Then, we arrived at the doors. We got our t-shirts first. They were soft, practically the softest shirt I have, with blue lettering that said "I/O 15." I'm ashamed to say I stuffed mine in my backpack now, not because of any reason, but I still wish I'd put it on. We sat down on the tuffets. Mine was red. There were different types of chairs as well, including beanbags (they went first) big leather cubes (also popular) and director's chairs (they went last, but they were still cool). They were all red, yellow, green and blue after the colors of Google. Onstage, there was a projection screen and a giant, and I mean giant, statue of the android symbol. A man came onstage and gave us a warm-up, then introduced us to a man called Astro Teller, the boss of the X-prize chapter, which basically gives a bunch of big problems to a bunch of smart guys and gals, then sees who the first company to solve it is. They get a lot of money.

He gave us a presentation on things like wind turbines that rose into the sky, so they could collect more air and electric-powered drones that could carry things like burritos around, so food wouldn't have to sit through traffic to get to the person. Of course, the drones could have many other uses besides burrito transportation, but you get my drift. Astro also emphasized the importance of making mistakes, because without mistakes, we would just keep doing the same thing over and over again and never learn anything.

After the presentation, we were divided into groups for the three activities. My group first went to an activity where you used a programming language called Blockly to make a cartoon yeti dance. While I had never used Blockly before, I used a program called Alice once, and the language it used was very similar.

After that activity was over, we went to my favorite station. We used Blockly there too, to program a ball called a Sphyro to do commands. I made it light up when it ran into things.

When that was over, we went to the last table, where we were trying out a new app that we could use to make our own Scooby Doo story. I partnered up with a girl named Julia, who was also from the MAGIC program. Our cartoon featured a major plot twist, in which the gang had been evil, running unusual creatures off their land and then saying they had solved a crime. Although we didn't win a prize for it, the video was still fun to make.

After I left Google I/O, the idea of working there felt more tangible, practically within reach already. Before going, the concept was used like: "I don't know what I want to do when I grow up. Maybe I'll be a writer, maybe a guide dog trainer." Then my voice would turn jokey and I'd say, "Maybe I'll even work for Google." Now, that voice sounds more serious.