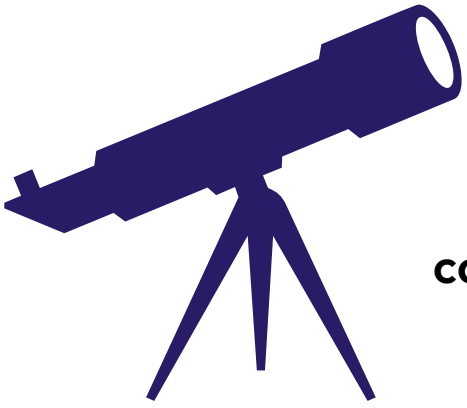
Coding for Astronomy

Meet Dillon, an astronomer in California. Dillon uses telescopes to study the birth and death of massive stars.

Dillon is a Chinese American born in San Francisco. Dillon's parents worked hard to give him a good education. By the time he was 4, he could read most children's books and multiply! These reading and math skills made learning new things easier. Dillon approached life with curiosity, spending a lot of time at the library reading about anything that interested him. Early in life, Dillon wanted to become a mathematician, a short story writer, a veterinarian, and a long-distance hiker.



However, the field that most interested Dillon was astronomy. **You can see thousands of nearby stars with your eyes, but with scientific tools, observation, and computer programming, scientists can learn information from the skies above.**

Dillon learned to program from his high school math teacher, Mr. Cohen. Programming seemed scary and mysterious to Dillon at first, but learning from Mr. Cohen made him more comfortable.

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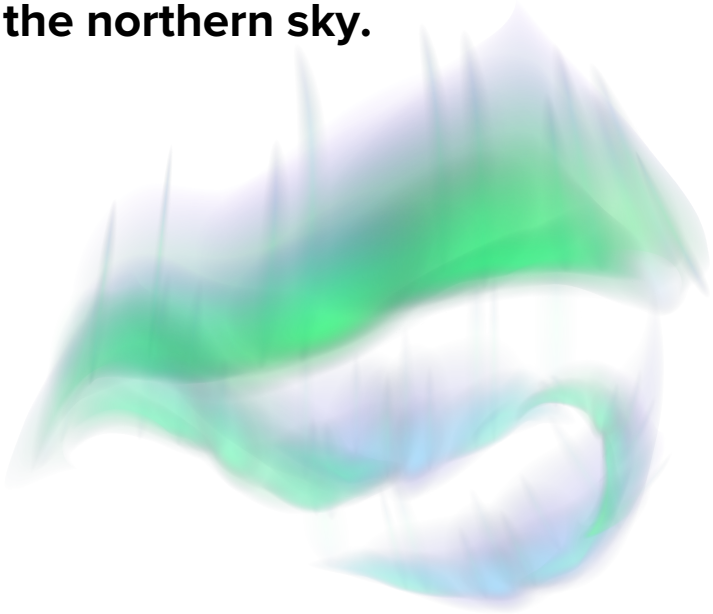
Dillon enjoyed how each problem taught him something new about how to code. The process of trying, failing, debugging, and finally getting the answer has helped Dillon in both science and programming.

Now, Dillon is working on a survey of the northern sky.



Some of the objects he can find include black holes and massive stars exploding. Dillon uses code to search for these explosions. Then, he continues to observe these objects to identify them and create models. Most of Dillon's time is spent writing and debugging code to help him identify objects and learn from data.

A lot of discoveries can be made using this data. The first step to making these discoveries is asking the right scientific questions. The next step is to play around with code until he finds something new!

Dillon believes that programming is one of the most useful skills you can have. **With just a little bit of code, you might find yourself doing things you never thought were possible.**