

STEMUp is laser focused on ensuring every child and every community across the metro Atlanta region have access to the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) tools and skills to be competitive in the 21st Century workforce.

THE ISSUE

As technology continues to advance at a rapid pace, current job trends demand a higher level of proficiency in science and math-related subjects. If today's youth are to become self-sufficient and productive members of society in the coming decades, mastery of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) related subjects is necessary as growth in technology jobs continues to outpace the supply of qualified workers.

UNITED WAY'S ROLE

Thanks to our sponsors, including Cox Enterprises, AT&T Aspire, and General Motors, and United Way of Greater Atlanta's African American Partnership Affinity Group, United Way of Greater Atlanta is rolling out critical supports in partnership with schools, nonprofit organizations, and volunteers to ensure every young person who has the talent and interest will stay on a path to a STEM career.

Driving toward this goal requires a multi-faceted approach that includes; supporting the development and expansion of fun and engaging STEM skill building programs, ensuring communities have access to up-to-date technology and instruction, exposing youth to future STEM careers and building STEM learning ecosystems by intentionally connecting learning environments through collaboration. Given United Way's long-standing leadership role in convening partners and building collaborative groups, playing a role in building STEM ecosystems in our region just makes sense.

United Way of Greater Atlanta is excited to share four programs that are focused on supporting STEM ecosystems through innovation, youth leadership, mentoring, and community building.

SUPPORTING STEM THROUGH INNOVATION

United Way of Greater Atlanta is pleased to announce the **2019 STEMUp: Youth Maker Competition**. This live competition modeled after the television show "Shark Tank" is an opportunity for middle and high school aged students across our 13-county region to use their ideas, voice and leadership to improve their communities. The prize is a small award to support students who have innovative STEM-related ideas to solve problems in their communities. Areas of priority for United Way include improving engagement in STEM by under-represented groups, innovation, social responsibility, and partnerships with STEM-related businesses.

We believe that young people's leadership and voice is critical to addressing the social and economic issues facing our communities. It is our goal to ensure both the process and the results of the Youth Maker Prize will showcase young people's ingenuity and resourcefulness when it comes to addressing the barriers to thriving communities.



SUPPORTING STEM THROUGH YOUTH LEADERSHIP

In partnership with Science ATL, United Way is seeking support to expand the **Georgia Chief Science Officer (CSO)** Program. The program is focused on cultivating a cadre of diverse student

leaders to improve STEM interest and exposure in area middle and high schools. The CSO program empowers students with a voice in STEM programming at their schools and in their communities.

At each participating school, two students are elected to be that school's CSOs and attend a week-long summer STEM Institute where they learn leadership skills and, with the support of coaches, create a campus action plan to increase STEM exposure, engagement and learning in their school. During the school year, these students are tasked with providing leadership and advocacy for their fellow students as they work to implement their plans in partnership with school administration. Throughout the year, CSOs meet regularly with their coaches and peer CSOs to continue to refine their action plans, all while building the employability skills that will serve them into adulthood, and hopefully into STEM careers.



SUPPORTING STEM THROUGH MENTORSHIP

United Way of Greater Atlanta and National Cares Mentoring Movement are partnering to expand the evidence-based **HBCU Rising** model within a school or high quality afterschool program. HBCU Rising is a mentoring program focused on changing the educational and workforce trajectories of under-represented communities in the STEM fields through a two-tiered approach –

- Tier I: Students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) who are majoring in STEM programs will mentor 30 middle school students from groups traditionally under-represented in the STEM fields (students of color and girls)
- Tier II: College mentors are in turn mentored by STEM professionals to help prepare them for careers in the STEM fields



SUPPORTING STEM THROUGH COMMUNITY BUILDING

United Way of Greater Atlanta is committed to addressing the growing digital divide that keeps many young people and their families from being able to compete in the digital age. Things like access to Wi-Fi, up to date technology equipment, and highly skilled technology teachers create barriers for students and families. For children of color, and low-income children and their families, this divide is the greatest. For instance, a report by the U.S. Department of Education found that 39% of children ages 3 to 18 did not have home internet access in 2015. Without access to the tools to learn valuable digital literacy skills, families and their children cannot reach their full potential.

Get Connected: Closing the Digital Divide is a comprehensive two-generation technology access program that provides training and supports in high-needs communities. Through this program, United Way partners with local non-profit organizations and public and private agencies to expand computer training and access to technology resources. A needs assessment is completed for the selected community that includes gaps and assets in access to technology. Additionally, digital literacy workshops are provided to families in the area – parents and youth – as research highlights that parent engagement in STEM is an effective strategy to improve STEM youth outcomes. Additionally, since families in these under-served communities often do not have access to technology at home, families receive a laptop to take home after completion of the digital literacy classes when possible.

Though each program can successfully stand alone in its impact on the youth and communities served, building comprehensive, layered programming like the four programs noted above are

important steps in building the STEM learning ecosystems that experts say has the greatest chance of improving STEM-related outcomes long term.

THE RESULTS

In 2019 alone, United Way's STEM initiatives impacted over 538 young people and their families who live in communities with low Child Well-Being scores.



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