



Building the Youth

IMPACT REPORT 2025



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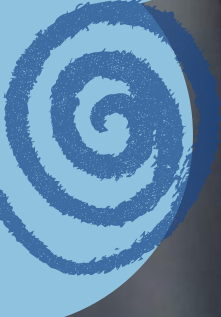



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Rise in STEM is a youth-led initiative that delivers inclusive STEM learning and leadership opportunities, empowering young people to innovate, build community, and shape the future.

RISE **STEM**



Words From Our Founder

Recognizing that the many students we have worked with are engaged in sports, The STEM Athletics Pilot Program was designed to connect athletic identity with STEM exploration, helping young people recognize how skills developed through sports such as discipline, teamwork, and problem-solving translate into success in science and technology fields. This initiative promotes wellness, builds transferable skills, and encourages career readiness through hands-on workshops, leadership development, and experiential learning.

Targeting students in Grades 7–12, the pilot engages participants across two schools through workshops, events, field trips focused on leadership, career pathways, athletic performance, academic readiness and digital innovation in sports. Together, these initiatives create a bridge between physical activity and future opportunities in STEM.

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Sincerely,

Irene Duah-Kessie

About Rise In STEM

Rise In STEM is a youth-led organization that promotes STEM learning and leadership opportunities for young people across the Greater Toronto Area. Our mission is to empower youth to explore, lead, and innovate through accessible STEM experiences that reflect their identities and lived.

Our Mission

We want to level the playing field for underserved youth by breaking down barriers to higher education and STEM career pathways.

Our Vision

We envision a strong and socially conscious STEM workforce, where youth from underserved communities have the opportunity to participate and thrive.



Skills Development

Building technical and transferable skills through hands-on experience.

Research In Action

using evidence and community insights to shape data-driven programs and resources.

Leadership Development

Cultivating confidence, team work and youth voice.

Health & Well-being

Centering holistic growth by integrating wellness, movement and self-care

Year In Review

This year our efforts have centered around promoting physical activity, wellness, and STEM exploration and post-secondary readiness. We are extremely proud of our efforts this year, which has been foundational in our work to expand our programs, supports, and resources to advance STEM leadership among young people.



STEM ATHLETICS



**TRANSITIONS TO
POST-SECONDARY**



**WELLNESS
SERIES**

STEM Athletics

Cohort 1

Rise In STEM was proud to be a community partner for the Toronto Raptors Annual Hackathon at York University. Students collaborated with peers and mentors to explore creative, data-driven solutions in sports technology and performance. The experience also included attending a Raptors game, where students toured the MLSE Digital Labs and witnessed the many innovative ways technology is advancing sports and the overall game experience. Students visited the Raptors Uprising



Raptors Women's Empowerment Game



" I learned alot about sports and a bit of STEM
STEM Athletics Participant

Cohort 2

Our second cohort was themed around volleyball, where participants built foundational skills in the sport while learning directly from professional volleyball players who joined as guest coaches. Alongside athletic training, participants developed engineering skills in design thinking and structural stability through a hands-on challenge to create a volleyball launcher using simple materials and key engineering principles.



A background image showing three people climbing a colorful rock wall. The wall is divided into sections of blue, pink, and green. The climbers are wearing harnesses and are reaching for various colored holds. The overall scene is bright and active, suggesting a fun and challenging activity.

STEM Athletics

Explore, Build, Play

Our inaugural STEM Athletics full-day event at MLSE LaunchPad invited young people to explore the intersection of sports and STEM in an interactive and immersive way. The experience combined hands-on learning, teamwork, and play, showing how science, technology, and innovation shape the world of athletics. We collaborated with MLSE LaunchPad, Visions of Science, the MLSE Esports Team, and D3P Sports & Community to deliver a series of engaging workshops and activities focused on coding, digital innovation and team work in sports.

STEM Athletics Scholarships

We created new scholarship opportunities for students involved in our STEM Athletics initiatives. A total of \$4,000 in scholarships was awarded, including two \$1,000 Excellence Scholarships and four \$500 Awards recognizing outstanding academic and athletic achievement. These scholarships celebrate students who excelled both in the classroom and on the field. We're honoured to give back to our community in this way and look forward to expanding our financial support for students' education in the years ahead.



Student Ambassadors

This year, we proudly launched our six-month Student Ambassadors Program to deepen youth leadership within Rise In STEM. Ambassadors serve as peer leaders, supporting event coordination, outreach, and program facilitation. They are participating in a variety of capacity-building initiatives and applying their learnings and skills to shape our 2026 program activities, while also gaining valuable experience to support their future academic journeys. Our student ambassador team consisted of 4 grade 7-8 students and 5 grade 10-12 students supporting initiatives respective to their peers.

OUR HIGH SCHOOL AMBASSADORS



Sara
Grade 12



David
Grade 12



Kaden
Grade 12



Vict'ry
Grade 12



Aaliyah
Grade 10



160+

UNIQUE STUDENTS ENGAGED
ACROSS ALL INITIATIVE



49

UNIQUE STUDENTS ENGAGED IN
STEM ATHLETICS



07

SCHOLARSHIPS DISTRIBUTED



09

STUDENT AMBASSADORS



MLSE x LG



This year, Rise In STEM was recognized as a Community Hero with the MLSE x LG Community Hero Spotlight, celebrating local changemakers making a positive impact in their communities. The feature highlighted our organization's commitment to empowering Black youth in STEM through culturally relevant programs, mentorship, and community partnerships. We also received a generous \$20,000 donation to advance our STEM Athletics programming introducing more support for student athletes.



“ The main thing I learned was being a kid doesn't mean you can't do a lot of things. It's just [that] kids might not have leaders around them that can help them. Since I want to become a software engineer when I'm older, Rise In STEM has a really big part of my future.

Sayo

Rise In STEM Participant

Spotlight



This recognition was especially meaningful as it was shared with the community at Father Henry Carr, where the journey began for many of our team members. This was a full-circle moment that continues to inspire our mission to uplift the next generation of changemakers in STEM. Through this partnership, our program participants also had the opportunity to attend the Canadian Shield Tournament and the Toronto Maple Leafs game enhancing their overall experience in our pilot program.

“ These kind of programs are things that helped me and shaped me to be who I am. Kids here in these areas sometimes don’t know who to go for support. But a program, like this allows them to know, Okay I know I have Rise in STEM to go to.”

Immaculate

Youth Action Committee Member





Hear From Our Youth

“As part of our knowledge sharing activities, our research team has prepared a series of reports and presentations to engage community members around our recommendations. We launched a youth-focused Wellness Series promoting mental health, self-care, and movement. This series was informed by insights from our research, emphasizing the importance of holistic well-being as students navigate their academic and career pathways.

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”

Devaughn

Peer Researcher, Rise In STEM

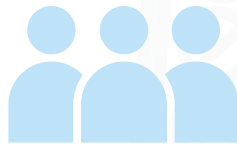
Research In Action

This year, we entered the knowledge mobilization phase of our community research project, **Transitions to Post-Secondary Pathways**. Our Peer Researcher Team is transforming insights gathered from youth in the community and community partners into actionable resources. The goal is to ensure our findings not only inform Rise In STEM's internal programs, but also contribute to broader conversations around equity, access, and representation in STEM.

Our goal is to ensure the findings not only inform our internal programs but also support broader conversations around equity, access, and representation in STEM. Through a series of activities, we are sharing what we've learned and engaging young people and communities to co-create solutions that reflect lived experiences.

04

PEER RESEARCHERS ENGAGED



30+

COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENGAGED



25

WELLNESS SERIES STUDENTS



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OUR PEER RESEARCHERS

Wellness Series

Grounded in our research, we identified a need to support not only academic readiness, but also students' overall well-being. Many students shared challenges related to stress, burnout, and navigating new environments, highlighting the importance of holistic supports alongside academic preparation.

In response, we launched the Wellness Series to meet this need in a way that felt engaging, relatable, and community-driven. By creating shared experiences outside of traditional classroom settings, students were able to connect with one another, try new activities, and explore practices that support their physical, social, and emotional well-being as they prepare for their post-secondary journeys.

This series informed the development of our upcoming Bootcamp and Resource Hub, shaping a more holistic approach to supporting students in their transition to post-secondary.

WELLNESS SERIES 1

Move & Recharge At Sweat and Tonic

35 STUDENTS
ENGAGED
ACROSS
THE SERIES

Focused on physical well-being, this session introduced students to structured fitness in a new environment, encouraging movement as a tool for stress management and energy.



Chris Osei-Kusi, Founder @SwitchMentality

Culinary with Roger Mooking

The Wellness Series 2 workshop was a fun, hands-on culinary session led by Roger Mooking, a Trinidadian-born, Canadian-raised, award-winning chef and restaurateur. Students built foundational cooking skills while preparing a simple saltfish and roast bake meal together, fostering connection, collaboration, and practical life skills. The session concluded with a brief reflection on the supports and strategies needed to navigate their transition to post-secondary.



Roger Mooking



“This class taught me more about cooking techniques, that I will be applying very soon.”

Youth Participant

Pilates & Chill At The Villij

Our third session focused on physical and emotional well-being, creating space for mindfulness, relaxation, and reflection at The Villij. Students participated in a pilates and yoga class, followed by guided discussions exploring their connections to self, family, and community. The session served as a reminder of the importance of slowing down and prioritizing well-being while navigating new transitions.



100%
participant satisfaction (5/5 average rating)

Media & Press

Toronto Maple Leafs x LG: Community Impact

MARCH 28, 2025

The Toronto Maple Leafs and LG Canada recognize RISE IN STEM as a Community Hero for its contributions to advancing equitable access to STEM education and creating positive community impact.



CityNews: Sports Expanding STEM Access

APRIL 25, 2025

Rise in STEM is using its STEM Athletics program to make STEM education more accessible to underserved youth in Toronto's West Humber-Clairville community. The 12-week initiative blends sports and STEM learning to increase exposure, representation, and awareness of STEM pathways.

Bridging the Digital Divide for Toronto Youth

AUGUST 13, 2024

Rise in STEM is featured for its community-based approach to improving digital access and STEM engagement for underserved youth in Toronto. Highlighted is Let's Get Digital initiative, which expanded access to technology, digital literacy training, and mentorship through local partnerships, supporting more equitable participation in STEM learning opportunities.



Our Supporters

Our inaugural STEM Athletics full-day event at MLSE LaunchPad invited young people to explore the intersection of sports and STEM in an interactive and immersive way. The experience combined hands-on learning, teamwork, and play, showing how science, technology, and innovation shape the world of athletics.

Funders



An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Ontario Trillium Foundation



MLSE Foundation



City of Toronto



LG Canada



Toronto Maple Leafs

Program Supporters

Father Henry Carr Catholic Secondary School, Toronto Raptors , MLSE LaunchPad, Sports Check, D3P Sports & Community, Greenhouse Juices, Honey Soul Food , Fit-For-Eva, The Villij, Roger Mooking, Switch Mentality, and Dose Juices

Our Financial Position

All financial records presented account for January to December 2025

	2025
Revenue	
Grants	\$155,000
Donations	\$ 1,828.00
Total Revenue	\$156,828.00
Expenses	
Personnel (staff, speakers & volunteers)	\$109,567.65
Program Supplies (food, materials, transportation)	\$43,942.50
Capacity Building	\$3134.70
Administrative	\$15,000
Total Expenses	\$171,644.85
Net Assets	
Total Beginning of the year	\$223,067.47
End of the year	\$51,422.62

Join Our Mission

Rise in STEM has proudly served our community with supporting black youth in STEM through empowerment, advocacy and innovation.



DONATE

Believing in brighter futures through STEM? [Support our mission with a donation](#) and help us keep building opportunities that last.



PARTNER

Work alongside us to amplify our reach and build pathways that connect youth to bright futures in STEM.



ATTEND

Take part in our upcoming workshops and events that bring students, mentors, and industry leaders together to explore innovation and opportunity in STEM.



FOLLOW

Be part of our journey. Follow [@riseinstem](#) or visit [www.riseinstem.ca](#) to stay informed about new programs, events, and milestones.



RISE↑ STEM

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