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TEENHACKS LI: TECHNOLOGY IS NO LONGER A BOYS CLUB

Within the twentieth century, the United States experienced revolutionary changes to its social paradigms that would prudently plant a seed for opportunity amongst women. Ranging from finally expressing their voice in society through suffrage to rupturing the gender norms that restricted the ambitions of millions of pioneering women, we have taken one step forwards an equitable society. However, despite precedent that was established decades ago, problems continue to plague women from achieving their full potential, specifically the insufficiency of women in STEM related fields. Glaring statistics that point to only 28% of women participating within a STEM workforce, our organization is providing opportunities for young girls in New York to cement their passions towards a lifelong pursuit in the advancements of science and technology.

TeenHacks LI is a student led organization that expands opportunities within STEM fields by hosting hackathons in which students learn invaluable skills of programming and computer science that are often overlooked within our education system. On top of providing opportunities to hundreds of students that share a zealous passion for programming to solve the world's problems, our organization is striving towards an equitable future, specifically to break the generational trends of the shortage of women within science and mathematical fields.

These trends observed are often the result of the lack of opportunity in male dominated subjects juxtaposed with the lack of female role models that encourage young girls to take interest in STEM fields, causing a vicious cycle that seems to be never ending. However, our last virtual hackathon which featured over 500 participants, specifically consisting of 280 ambitious girls, tackled these root causes that prohibit progression. The hackathon, which occurred over the span of three weeks, provided a myriad number of opportunities through workshops from renowned companies that share their expertise on emerging technologies and career choices as a female, alongside activities that reinforced skills that were taught. Some of the many workshops featured included an intro to coding workshop in four different languages, the TIBCO CLOUD Fast Track Workshop which taught participants how to incentivize online sales through cloud integration and API-led processes, and other workshops that taught participants about artificial intelligence, web development, blockchain, and neural coding. These workshops taught

fundamental skills in a way that even beginner programmers can understand, making TeenHacks perfect for young girls embarking a journey in STEM. TeenHacks further featured workshops to empower female programmers through panels of women that shared their experiences in STEM fields, directly interacting with our participants to provide inspiration and advice. We featured Abigayle Peterson, founder of Magnify Wellness, and Nia Asemota, an engineer and technical instructor at NYU, among other women speakers, to serve as role models for the emerging generation of engineers, programmers, and designers. TeenHacks LI was able to offer a multi pronged solution to tackle the disparities found in STEM fields by making programming accessible through workshops hosted by renowned companies, but also provided long term implications through inspirational women that serve as role models for the next generation of engineers, doctors, programmers, and scholars.

The skills and inspiration TeenHacks provided within the hackathon came into fruition when our participants crafted solutions towards real world problems, leveraging the power of programming. The team that won the People's Choice Award, NRG, created a multipronged solution to combat the implications of certain diseases like Alzheimers. Gina, who was the project manager of the team, spearheaded discussions and organized roles to help code a machine learning algorithm that predicts the health status of your brain, based on whether it's utilizing fuel efficiently. Their algorithm will be able to predict whether someone's brain is operating on enough fuel, classifying whether someone is in a state that indicates diabetes, Alzheimer's, or other diseases related to inefficient energy extraction. With their solution, we can predict the onset of neurological diseases before they happen. Gina is one of the hundreds of young girls that TeenHacks Li has empowered to break generational social norms and create an impact on society by tackling everyday issues.

TeenHacks is now hosting another virtual hackathon on June 26th to inspire an emerging generation of programmers and spread opportunities for marginalized populations —and we hope that you join us on that journey for a more equitable future in STEM.

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