Girls STEM Institute: **F**ostering **a**nd **M**aximizing **I**nterdisciplinary **L**earning **Y**ear-round **(F.a.M.I.L.Y)**

Girls STEM Institute (GSI) is a transformative space that empowers young girls of Color to live their best lives and embrace their innate brilliance through STEM exploration. Through socially transformative STEM curriculum, GSI addresses issues of inequity, racism, gender bias, and other stigmas as social constructs that can be overcome and dismantled. GSI is unique in that it focuses on the whole person through the integration of STEM learning with overall wellness and well-being. GSI is a year-round enrichment program with a summer intensive. Within GSI’s rich, relevant, and supportive context, young ladies have the freedom to grow interpersonally and intellectually.

GSI’s *F.a.M.I.L.Y* project explores how participation in Girls STEM Institute influences Black girls and their parents/caregivers as lifelong STEM learners. Our scholars and their parents/caregivers have an opportunity to complete life-enriching multidisciplinary STEM experiences collaboratively. The goal of this year-long project is to explore how these learning experiences impact Black girls and their caregivers' enjoyment of STEM, interest in STEM content and careers, and understanding of STEM as a tool for personal and social change.

Due to COVID-19, the *F.a.M.I.L.Y* project shifted to a 100% online format where all activities take place biweekly via Zoom. Currently, seven families are participating in this project. Our first session took place in October and our sessions will conclude in April. Our scholars and their parents/caregivers have had the opportunity to interact with STEM professionals around a variety of STEM activities including chemistry, forensic science, mathematics and food insecurity, geography, organ donation, etc.

A few words from the Family

*The topic of underserved communities encourages me to brainstorm ways that I can contribute to improving the conditions. So, essentially the information will influence me to think more about the needs of our community as a whole as opposed to just me and my immediate family. ~parent/caregiver*

*This learning space is like no other! I feel welcomed, free from adverse consequences, encouraged to share, and uplifted! ~parent/caregiver*

*This space allows for my daughter and I to learn together. As a result, we strengthen our bond. ~parent/caregiver*

*I learned about how poverty is systematic to keep you at a certain level of wealth so others higher up can benefit.**I could use what I learned today to motivate myself and others to not fall victim to the system. ~scholar 1*

*I feel more engaged and I am eager to learn more. ~scholar 2*

*This learning space takes time on stuff, and actually focuses on stuff that can be useful in life. ~scholar 3*