Self-eSTEM Empowers BIPOC Women, Girls in Science, Math

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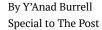
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Adamaka Ajaelo. Courtesy photo.

By Y'Anad Burrell
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In a world where technology plays an increasingly central role in all aspects of life, the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education cannot be overstated. Recognizing the significance of STEM for the future, focusing on young women and girls is a critical step in achieving gender equality and empowering the next generation.

Self-eSTEM, an Oakland-based non-profit organization, was founded by Adamaka Ajaelo, an Oakland native who had a successful corporate career with several Bay Area technology and non-tech companies. Ajaelo boldly decided to step away from these companies to give 100% of her time and talent to the non-profit organization she started in 2014 in the belief that she can change the game in innovation and future STEM leaders.

Over the course of a decade, Ajaelo has provided futurist tech programming to more than 2,000 BIPOC women and girls. The organization has an Early STEM Immersion Program for ages 7-17, Emerging Leaders Workshops for ages 18-25 and volunteer network opportunities for ages 25 and up.

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While the organization's programs center on innovation and technology, participants also gain other valuable skills critical for self-development as they prepare for a workforce future. "Self-eSTEM encourages young women to expand on teamwork, communication, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The organization allows young women to enter STEM careers and pathways," said Trinity Taylor, a seventh-year innovator.

"Our journey over the last decade is a testament to the power of community and opportunity, and I couldn't be more excited for what the future holds as we continue to break barriers and spark dreams," said Ajaelo.

"By encouraging girls to explore STEM fields from a young age, we foster their intellectual growth and equip them with the tools needed to thrive in a competitive global economy," Ajaelo says.

Empowering young girls through STEM education is also a key driver of innovation and progress. When young women and girls are encouraged to pursue careers in STEM, they bring unique perspectives and problem-solving approaches to the table, leading to more diverse and inclusive solutions. This diversity is crucial for driving creativity and pushing boundaries in scientific and technological advancements.

Self-eSTEM has fundraising opportunities year-round, but year-end giving is one of the most critical times to support the program. Visit www.selfestem.org to donate to the organization, as your generosity and support will propel programming support for today's innovators.

You will also find more details about Self-eSTEM's programs on their website and social channels @selfestemorg

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