



Annual Report 2024

October 2023- September 2024

STEMCAT: STEM Community Advancement and Training

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Welcome and Introduction

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Community Members,

This year marks a significant milestone for our organization as we transition from the I Will Mentorship Foundation to doing business as **STEMCAT: STEM Community Advancement and Training**. This transition reflects our commitment to a renewed and sharpened focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, which has always been at the heart of our mission.

The decision to rebrand under the name STEMCAT was made to better encapsulate our expanded vision and the scope of our programs. As STEMCAT, we are broadening our reach and deepening our impact, emphasizing the importance of STEM education in equipping our young adults with the skills they need to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. The new name, **STEM Community Advancement and Training (STEMCAT)**, represents our dedication to advancing STEM education and providing comprehensive training that prepares our participants for future careers and leadership roles.

This change is more than just a rebranding; it signifies our evolution as an organization. Over the years, we have grown from a mentorship-focused foundation to a full-fledged community resource offering a wide array of educational and vocational programs. STEMCAT will allow us to more accurately communicate the breadth and depth of our work, ensuring that our community and supporters understand the significant impact we are making in the lives of young adults.

Our programming now runs from October to September, allowing us to strategically plan and execute our initiatives throughout the year, maximizing our impact and ensuring continuity in our educational offerings.

We are excited about this new chapter and the opportunities it brings. With this transition, we will continue to uphold the values and mission that have guided us from the beginning, while also expanding our efforts to meet the growing needs of our community. With sincere appreciation,



Dr. Jesse Bryson

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CEO and Founder STEMCAT

Executive Summary The past year has been transformative for our

organization as we officially

transitioned from the I Will Mentorship Foundation to doing business as STEMCAT: STEM Community Advancement and Training. This change was driven by our desire to more accurately reflect the expanded scope and impact of our work, particularly in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The rebranding to STEMCAT symbolizes our renewed commitment to equipping young adults with the skills they need to succeed in a rapidly evolving world. This year's accomplishments demonstrate the power of our mission and the collective effort of our community, volunteers, and supporters.

Our transition to STEMCAT has allowed us to sharpen our focus on STEM education while also broadening our reach. We have successfully launched new programs and expanded existing ones, serving over 500 young adults across our various initiatives. Our programs now run from October to September, allowing us to strategically plan and implement our activities to maximize impact and continuity throughout the year.

One of our most significant achievements this year has been the expansion of the **STEMCAT Mentorship Program**. This program has become a cornerstone of our efforts to foster curiosity, critical thinking, and innovation among young adults in our community. Through weekly mentorship sessions, we have seen measurable improvements in our participants' STEM subject performance and an increased interest in pursuing STEM-related careers. This program has not only provided educational support but has also built lasting relationships between mentors and mentees, creating a strong network of support and encouragement.

In addition to our mentorship program, we introduced new vocational workforce development classes, focusing on high-demand trades such as drone technology for agriculture and welding. These classes have been instrumental in providing young adults with practical skills that are directly applicable to the workforce. The success of these programs is evident in the increased enrollment and certification rates, which have equipped our participants with the qualifications they need to secure employment in rapidly growing industries.

Our **Summer STEM Camp** has continued to be a highlight of our annual programming. This week-long camp offers young adults hands-on experiences in advanced STEM fields, providing them with the opportunity

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to explore subjects in-depth and gain practical knowledge. The overwhelming positive feedback from participants, with 90% reporting high levels of satisfaction, underscores the camp's effectiveness in sparking interest and excitement about STEM careers.

Another major initiative this year was the launch of our **Community Resilience Initiative**. This program focuses on sustainable farming and food production, addressing critical issues such as food security and environmental stewardship in our community. Through this initiative, we engaged over 50 community volunteers who contributed to the production of more than 2,000 pounds of fresh produce. This food was distributed to local food banks and community members in need, providing not only nourishment but also education on sustainable agricultural practices and health. The initiative also included a series of educational classes on topics such as composting, soil health, and advanced agricultural techniques, which have empowered participants with the knowledge to make a positive impact on their environment. Looking forward, we are excited about our plans for continued growth and expansion. One of the most significant developments on the horizon is the transition to the **STEMCAT Center**, a new 20,000 square foot building that will serve as the hub for all our educational and community initiatives. This state-of-the-art facility will dramatically increase our capacity, allowing us to offer more programs, reach more young adults, and deepen our impact in the region. The new center is part of a broader capital campaign that we are launching to ensure that we have the resources needed to bring this vision to life.

Furthermore, we are expanding our regional footprint to serve not only Lee, Charlotte, and Collier counties but also Hendry County. This expansion reflects our commitment to reaching underserved communities and ensuring that every young adult in the region has access to quality education and mentorship opportunities.

As we reflect on this year's accomplishments, we are deeply grateful to our sponsors, volunteers, and community members who have made all of this possible. Your support has been instrumental in helping us achieve our goals and position ourselves for even greater success in the future. Together, we are building a brighter future for the next generation of leaders, innovators, and changemakers.

Programs and Outcomes

STEMCAT Mentorship Program

- **Overview:** Weekly mentorship sessions focused on STEM subjects, aimed at fostering curiosity and critical thinking among participants.
- **Outcomes:** Over 500 young adults participated, with measurable improvements in STEM subject performance and increased interest in STEM careers.

Summer STEM Camp

- **Overview:** A week-long camp offering hands-on experiences in advanced STEM fields.
- **Outcomes:** 90% of participants reported a high level of satisfaction, with many expressing a desire to pursue further education in STEM fields.

Vocational Workforce Development

- **Overview:** Expanded day and evening classes in high-demand trades such as drone technology for agriculture and welding.
- **Outcomes:** Increased enrollment and certification rates, with students gaining practical skills that are directly applicable to the workforce.

Community Resilience Initiative

- **Overview:** This initiative focuses on building community resilience through sustainable farming and food production. The program includes classes on agricultural practices, food sustainability, proper nutrition, mental health and environmental stewardship.

- **Goals:**

- o Increase food security in the community by producing fresh, local produce.
 - o Engage community members in sustainable farming practices.
 - o Provide educational opportunities related to agriculture and environmental science.
 - o Increase awareness of preventable diseases and mental health resources
- **Outcomes:**

- o **Volunteers:** Over 50 community volunteers participated in farm activities.
- o **Food Produced:** The farm produced over 2,000 pounds of fresh produce, distributed to local food banks and community members in need.
- o **Classes Offered:** Multiple classes were conducted on topics ranging from composting and soil health to advanced agricultural techniques.

Client Demographics

- **Gender:** 53.85% male, 35.66% female, 10.49% unknown.

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- **Ethnicity:** 5.24% Hispanic/Latino, 38.81% Non-Hispanic/Latino, 55.94% unknown.
- **Age Groups:** Predominantly aged 13-17 (35.66%) and 18-30 (25.70%).
- **Economic Status:** 29.90% identified as economically disadvantaged, 53.50% unknown.

Testimonials

- "The mentorship program has opened doors for me that I never knew existed. I now have a clear path to a STEM career!" — Jane D., 16.
- "Attending the STEM camp was the best experience of my life. I learned so much and made new friends with the same interests." — John P., 14.
- "The community farm has been a blessing. Not only do we have access to fresh, healthy food, but I've learned so much about sustainable agriculture that I'm applying in my own garden." — Maria S., Community Volunteer.

Average Cost Per Student

The average cost per student for the year was approximately \$1750, covering all program expenses, including materials, mentorship, and administration.

SWOT Analysis

- **Strengths:** Strong community support, experienced mentors, and a wide range of program offerings.
- **Weaknesses:** High percentage of unknown data in participant records.
- **Opportunities:** Expansion of programs and new facilities to reach more participants.
- **Threats:** Funding challenges and economic uncertainties.

Forward Thinking

As we look to the future, STEMCAT is poised for continued growth and impact. Our plans for the coming year include:

- **Expanded Day and Evening Vocational Workforce Development:** We will continue to grow our vocational programs, offering more classes and certifications in high-demand fields. These programs will be accessible to a wider range of participants, including those who may have other commitments during traditional hours.
- **STEMCAT Center Transition and Capital Campaign:** We are excited to announce the transition to a new STEMCAT Center, a 20,000 square foot building that will serve as the hub for all our educational

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and community initiatives. This new space will allow us to dramatically increase our capacity, offering more programs, reaching more students, and expanding our impact in the region. We are launching a capital campaign to fund this transition, and we are confident that with your support, we will make this vision a reality.

- **Regional Expansion:** In addition to serving Lee, Charlotte, and Collier counties, we are expanding our reach to Hendry County. This expansion will allow us to bring our programs to more communities in need, ensuring that every young adult in the region has access to quality education and mentorship opportunities.

With your continued support, we are confident that we can achieve these goals and make an even greater impact in the coming year. Together, we will continue to empower the next generation and build a stronger, more resilient community.

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Thank You to Our Sponsors

We are incredibly fortunate to have the support of several key sponsors whose contributions have been instrumental in the success of our programs:

- **United Way:** Your ongoing financial support has provided us with the resources necessary to expand our programs and reach more participants than ever before.
- **The City of Fort Myers:** Your partnership has been invaluable in helping us secure space, promote our programs, and engage with the community.
- **American Red Cross:** Your collaboration on our Community Resilience Initiative has empowered us to make a significant impact on food security and sustainable agriculture in our area.
- **The Price Foundation:** Your generous donations have enabled us to provide high-quality materials and resources to our students, ensuring that they have the tools they need to succeed.
- **Lee County Government:** Your support has been crucial in helping us expand our services and enhance our outreach efforts across the region.

To all our sponsors, thank you for believing in our mission and for your unwavering support. We look forward to continuing our partnership and achieving even greater success together in the years to come.