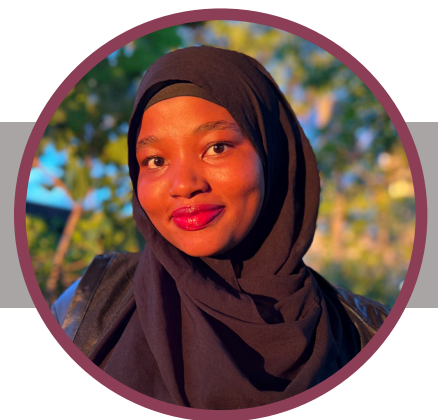


2023



WOMEN IN STEM SCHOLARSHIP

Encouraging women to pursue education, career opportunities and leadership roles in technology



To create a world in which men and women have equal opportunities, women need to have an active role in technology and technological developments. The Zonta International Women in Technology Scholarship aims to encourage women to pursue education, career opportunities and leadership roles in technology.

As a pilot program, the Women in Technology Scholarship was offered for the first time in 2019 and then again in 2021. In 2023, Zonta International awarded 30 international scholarships of US\$5,000 each. Read on to learn more about the 2023 international scholars.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Lily Chen



Citizenship: USA District 1

Pursuing bachelor's degree in mathematics and computer science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA

Lily Chen is an undergraduate student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), double majoring in mathematics and computer science. She has internship experience in quantitative finance and biostatistics. Her work now mainly focuses on natural language processing and artificial intelligence research. She co-led a research project on mitigating gender bias in Large Language Model (LLM)-based machine translation, which was accepted to Widening Natural Language Processing at Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (WiNLP @ EMNLP).

As a research intern, Lily additionally co-led a project on evaluating factuality in the plain language summaries of clinical abstracts generated by open source versus proprietary large language models, which she plans to submit to the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL) 2024.

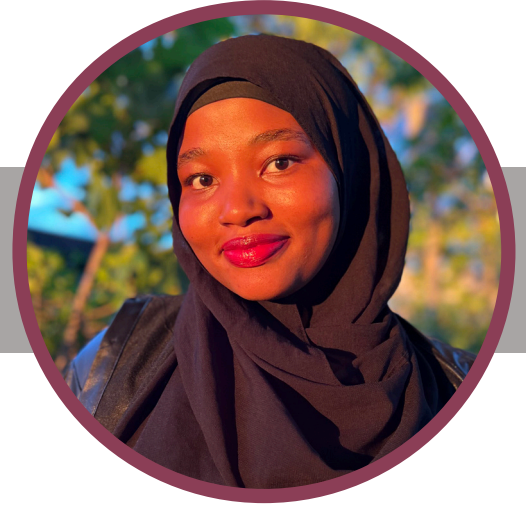
Lily will pursue a concurrent master's degree at MIT in computer science with a specialization in artificial intelligence. She aspires to earn a Ph.D. in machine learning and advance the state of human-aligned and safe artificial intelligence.

In her free time, Lily enjoys traveling, following the NBA, photographing French bulldogs, roaming city streets and trying new coffee stores.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Sabah Haji



Citizenship: USA

District 2

Pursuing bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering technology at State University New York Polytechnic Institute (SUNY Poly), USA

Sabah Haji's story is rooted in resilience and a passion for empowering women in STEM. A refugee from Nairobi, Kenya, she began her education and career in the United States. Sabah started her educational journey at Mohawk Valley Community College and advanced through the polytechnical program before pursuing a mechatronics certification and a degree in human services. She continued on to pursue her undergraduate studies in mechanical engineering technology at the world-class institution, SUNY Poly.

Currently, Sabah serves as a metrology process technician at Wolfspeed where she excels in the calibration, standardization and maintenance of precision measurement instruments vital to the semiconductor production process.

Sabah actively engages in initiatives supporting women in STEM, participating in the Real Life Rosie's program and speaking at the Manufacturers Association of Central New York Women in Manufacturing event. At the 69th New York City College of Technology Conference, Sabah served as a panelist where she seamlessly integrated personal experiences with emphasizing industry partnerships' pivotal role in student success.

Her advocacy for diversity continued at the 2023 Women in Semiconductors Conference where she championed inclusivity through engaging panel discussions.

Sabah's journey exemplifies the intersection of education, career and community impact, embodying the spirit of resilience and dedication to empowering women in STEM.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Adebimpe Rasak-Usman



Citizenship: Nigeria
District 3

Pursuing master's degree in environmental science at American University, USA

Adebimpe Rasak-Usman is a second-year environmental science master's student at American University, Washington D.C. While studying for this degree, she developed a passion for addressing global environmental issues, uncovering patterns of environmental inequity and advocating for inclusive solutions that promote both ecological health and social fairness by using data analysis and visualization.

In 2023, she worked as a research assistant analyzing air pollution variability in Washington D.C.'s urban neighborhoods. She also worked as an air quality consultant with EMPOWER DC, a non-profit focused on fighting for environmental justice, developing workshops and trainings to teach air ambassadors to monitor and interpret air pollution data.

After graduation, Adebimpe intends to gain professional experience in environmental data analysis by working with a company that shares a similar vision of using data processing and visualization to solve environmental problems through advisory and consulting. Adebimpe also looks forward to founding her own woman-led firm where she hopes to provide mentorship to women with the same interests.

Beyond her studies, she enjoys baking, watching TV shows and spending time with friends.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Alisa Douglas



Citizenship: Canada
District 4

Pursuing master's degree in applied science at the School of Biomedical Engineering at McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada

Alisa Douglas is studying biomedical engineering at McMaster University. She completed her primary and middle school education in Bangkok and Dubai and high school in Waterloo, Canada. Alisa then completed her bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering at McMaster in 2023. She also undertook co-op work terms at King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi in Bangkok, working on stem cells and at University of Waterloo simulating and optimizing ASA processes. Alisa completed two terms at McMaster working on dynamic T-cell vaccine responses in mice.

Alisa is currently researching tissue engineering as it applies to burn trauma patients at the Jeschke Lab in the David Braley Research Institute at the Hamilton General Hospital. Her research focuses on in-situ bioprinting of skin for wound healing and tissue regeneration in full-thickness burns.

Alisa has received several awards including Waterloo Collegiate Institute Honour Roll (2014-2018), the McMaster Entrance Award (2018) and the McMaster Research Scholarship - School of BME (2023). In addition, she has been recognized for specific projects including McMaster Nominee for Canadian IDEA Design Award - Smart Carpet Design (2019), Magnet Student Work Placement Program Award (2020), first prize for Best Undergraduate Presentation - Industrial Engineering and Operations Management Conference (Rome, Italy - 2021) and first prize for Best Process Design - 5th Year Undergraduate Capstone Project (2023).



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Haley Dees



Citizenship: USA
District 5

Pursuing bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering at Kent State University, USA

Haley Dees is a student at Kent State University majoring in aerospace engineering where she is set to graduate in 2025. In October 2021, Haley co-founded Kent State's Women in Engineering Club, in which she currently serves as the events coordinator. In this role, Haley plans general membership meetings and activities, planned and facilitated the first and second annual Womxn in STEM Collaborative Event and led the successful planning and execution of Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day.

Since 2022, Haley has also engaged in research about the aerodynamic efficiency of different winglet shapes. She presented this work on numerous occasions, and served on various panels at Kent State and in the surrounding community to share her experience as a woman in a male-dominated industry. In June 2022, Haley was appointed by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine to the Kent State University Board of Trustees. She is currently serving a two-year term as a non-voting member of the Board, bringing the perspective of the undergraduate student body to board and committee meetings.

In 2023, Haley was recognized as the recipient of the 2023 Golden Flash Award from her university's alumni association for her work across campus to encourage and support student success in and out of the classroom. Additionally, Haley serves on the Gender Subcommittee of Kent State University's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Taskforce, and as a member of the Gender, Equity, Advocacy and Representation (GEAR) Awards Steering Committee.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Mildred Chome



Citizenship: Kenya

District 6

Pursuing master's degree in modeling & simulation in mechanical engineering, University of Wisconsin Madison, USA

Mildred Chome is a master's candidate in mechanical engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a specialization in modeling and simulation. Recognized for her profound knowledge in mechanical principles, she effectively applies these in real-world contexts. As a teaching assistant for statistics, Mildred is renowned for her engaging teaching style and constructive feedback.

Beyond academia, Mildred demonstrates her expertise through hands-on projects involving Computer Aided Design (CAD) modeling, simulations and prototyping, particularly focusing on sustainable technology solutions. Her work aligns with key areas such as renewable energy, sustainable transport and innovative product design.

In the realm of community and international development, Mildred serves as an international mission strategist for Jumuiya ya Kaunti za Pwani "Commonwealth," where she plays a pivotal role in researching agricultural sustainability and enhancing vocational training in Kenya's coastal areas. She also heads the Ashrafu STEM & Mentorship project, fostering scientific education among Kenyan youth.

With her master's degree in view, Mildred is enthusiastic about contributing her skills to the engineering field, driven by a commitment to both academic excellence and societal betterment. Her career is a testament to her dedication to engineering innovation and community empowerment.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Aneliese Hebenstreit



Citizenship: USA
District 7

Pursuing master's degree in aerospace engineering at Saint Louis University, USA

Aneliese Hebenstreit is studying aerospace engineering at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri. Her thesis focuses on the intersection of systems engineering and mission assurance. The goal is to create a diagnosis and resolution modeling tool that can serve as an unbiased aid in decision making. Her work is supported by the NASA Electronic Parts and Packaging Program and the Scalable Asymmetric Lifecycle Engagement program.

Since 2021, Aneliese has been a NASA Pathways engineering intern at the NASA Armstrong Flight Research Center in the Mojave Desert, California. There, she has had the opportunity to work on the X-57 Maxwell – an all-electric aircraft; Revolutionary Vertical Lift Technology, a conceptual urban mobility project and the X-59, a supersonic research aircraft. Prior to this, she was an intern at NASA, working on the PRANDTL-M Mars Glider Swarm project.

Aneliese recently finished her Bachelor of Science degree in aerospace engineering at Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, Missouri. In her late undergraduate years, she participated in the campus satellite research team where she led the Command and Data Handling subsystem.

Aneliese hopes to convert to a full-time civil servant at NASA where she can continue to be passionate about her work and inspire other women to be excited about STEM. She would love to continue working on big-picture problems and guiding diverse teams.

For fun, Aneliese enjoys creating art using various mediums, participating in sustainability and conservation efforts, exploring urban areas, cycling, hiking and rock climbing.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Georgia Rea



Citizenship: Canada District 8

Pursuing a bachelor's degree in applied science in civil engineering at University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada

Georgia Rea is a fourth-year civil engineering undergraduate student at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. When she graduates with her undergraduate degree in May 2024, she will have achieved a minor in commerce in addition to her bachelor's degree in civil engineering. Georgia has been fascinated by buildings since childhood when she used to draw houses and construct them out of cardboard. Through her studies, she has developed an interest in sustainability - particularly within the field of structural design and construction.

Georgia has completed a total of 28 months in the cooperative education program at UBC. She worked as a project coordinator for EllisDon on one of Vancouver's biggest development projects, Oakridge Park, communicating with both consultants and sub-trades to resolve deficiencies while advancing the project schedule. She was also employed as a structural engineering intern at Glotman Simpson, a world-class engineering firm located in Vancouver. There, she had the opportunity to design various structural elements of high-rise towers.

Georgia is heavily involved in the community at UBC, volunteering for as many high school outreach events as she can, and is the graduation representative for the civil engineering student society, where she organizes events for the graduating class and civil engineering student body.

In her free time, Georgia enjoys playing on her intramural flag football team, being outside, hiking, biking, running and reading a good book.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Sofia Ferreira Colman



Citizenship: Paraguay District 9

Pursuing master's degree in tropical conservation biology and environmental science, with a focus in coral reef ecology at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, USA

Sofia Ferreira Colman is a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo where she is pursuing her master's degree, and is part of the Multiscale Environmental Graphical Analysis (MEGA) Lab. Her research focuses on coral reef ecology where she employs innovative technologies such as underwater three-dimensional structure-from-motion techniques and machine learning to enhance the monitoring of these fragile ecosystems.

Sofia's master's thesis revolves around creating three-dimensional models of coral reefs to investigate the connections between the reef habitat and the local fish community using a trait-based approach. Her analysis encompasses coral morphological traits, fish morphological, physiological and behavioral traits and benthic structural complexity metrics. Her goal is to discern the drivers of reef fish assemblages in Kona, Hawaii, a crucial step in predicting the impacts of environmental changes on reef ecosystems and improving conservation efforts.

Sofia, originally from Paraguay, pursued her dream of becoming a marine scientist by enrolling at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, where she completed her Bachelor of Science in marine science and is currently working on her master's degree. She aspires to continue her education by obtaining a Ph.D., with the long-term goal of becoming a professor at a research-focused institution. She is deeply passionate about marine biodiversity preservation, promoting diversity in STEM and inspiring the next generation of marine scientists.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Nithya Jaisankar



Citizenship: USA
District 10

Pursuing a bachelor's degree in data science at the University of Texas at Dallas, USA

Nithya Jaisankar is a Eugene McDermott Scholar and a National Merit Scholar, studying data science at the University of Texas at Dallas. She has worked on Natural Language Processing research with the Big Data Analytics Lab and on computational biology research in the Functional Genomics Lab. Nithya was also a visiting researcher at the University of Cambridge, where she analyzed the prevalence of artificial intelligence in law enforcement and its impact on the public's perception of government institutions. Her research accomplishments earned her the prestigious Goldwater Scholarship.

Nithya is deeply engaged with initiatives focused on women's empowerment. As a college mentor with the Young Women in Science and Engineering program, Nithya mentors high school students, encouraging them to pursue careers in engineering and computer science. As the conference committee chair for her university's Society of Women Engineers chapter, she organized a scholarship for a cohort of women engineers to attend the national conference, highlighting her commitment to providing greater opportunities for mentorship and collaboration among women engineers.

Nithya is also passionate about public policy. As the logistics director for her university's Roosevelt Institute chapter, she plays a pivotal role in encouraging students to hone their policy writing skills. Her contributions have been recognized with a published policy paper in the Roosevelt Institute's "10 Ideas" journal.

In the future, Nithya plans to pursue graduate studies in machine learning and AI ethics and to continue researching AI technologies.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Catherine Martinez



Citizenship: USA
District 11

Pursuing bachelor's degree in human developmental and regenerative biology with a secondary in mathematical sciences at Harvard College, USA

Catherine Martinez is an undergraduate student enrolled at Harvard College. With a specific interest in (hematologic) cancer biology, she joined the Zon Lab and worked on a project that studied the mechanisms of blood stem cell quality control. While this experience reinforced her interest in primary care over laboratory work, it gave her invaluable knowledge of and respect for research and bolstered her passion for cancer medicine.

Despite the strictly STEM nature of her pre-professional academic trajectory, Catherine established an interdisciplinary approach to healthcare that she followed throughout her college studies: an emphasis on celebrating life and inspiring communities through cultural and artistic involvement.

She is a proud member of the Harvard Ballet Company, which she is now dancing with for her fourth year. With a desire to explore her ethnic background and to bond with the Latinx community, she joined cultural groups through which she connected with students and learned of incredible family stories. Catherine also serves as a volunteer for Camp Kesem, a camp for children whose parents have/had cancer. Catherine is honored to have had the chance to help young children persevere through the confusing and overwhelming experiences associated with family cancer.

Catherine intends to breathe life into the field of medicine as an oncologist. She is incredibly grateful to Zonta for giving her the opportunity to further explore this interdisciplinary dynamic between medicine and the arts/culture as an undergraduate—a dynamic she will continue to explore in her future studies and throughout her career.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Kendahl Hinthorne



Citizenship: USA
District 12

Pursuing bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering at Montana State University, USA

Kendahl Hinthorne is in her junior year in the mechanical engineering program at Montana State University. As she narrows down her interests, she has discovered a strong passion for design and production in aerospace engineering.

Recently, Kendahl has been part of a NASA-funded high altitude ballooning project that delves into the atmospheric effects of eclipses. It is a collaborative effort in the lab, where almost everything flying with the balloon is crafted by someone on the team. Her focus has mainly been on designing payload boxes and apparatuses to house cameras capturing moments during the balloon's flight. These images not only offer a unique perspective, but also serve as vital forensics for understanding the dynamics of the balloon's flight.

Beyond her academic commitments, Kendahl has made it a point to maintain a well-balanced life. During her free time, she enjoys hiking, rafting and skiing. Additionally, playing the violin serves as a delightful mental break from her intensive studies. Photography is another passion of Kendahl's, and recently she has been fortunate enough to integrate that love into her engineering career.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Yasmine Gigi Tokman



Citizenship: Denmark
District 13

Pursuing master's degree in materials engineering at the Technical University of Denmark (DTU), Denmark

Yasmine Gigi Tokman is in the final year of her master's program in materials engineering at the Technical University of Denmark where she previously earned her bachelor's degree in the same field. Her academic journey has been marked by diverse experiences, including a research project at the European Space Agency. There, she focused on exploring the single-crystal plastic properties of complex alloys.

Yasmine thrives on bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, particularly through her work in predictive modeling of metallic materials. Through various research projects, she has gained proficiency in computational modeling and intricate laboratory techniques, making these areas her favorites to explore.

Yasmine aims to pursue a Ph.D. within her field of interest of metals and computational modeling to advance the capabilities of predictive modeling.

In her free time, Yasmine enjoys baking intricate cakes, reading and solving puzzles.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Constanze Albrecht



Citizenship: Germany
District 14

Pursuing master's degree in neuroinformatics at the ETH Zurich University in Switzerland, focusing on bioelectronics for brain pathologies and decision making.

Constanze Albrecht earned her bachelor's degree in psychology and engineering at the Ludwig Maximilian University and the Technical University of Munich, respectively. She gained first-hand insights into the research of neurotechnology, performing research in the realm of computational neuroscience as an Amgen Scholar at the Helmholtz Center, analyzing intracranial vasculature changes after stroke, as well as investigating the circuitry of the visual cortex at the ETH neurotechnology lab.

For her efforts, Constanze has been awarded the LMU Research prize for excellent students and Cambridge Symposium poster prize. In parallel to her studies, she has served as a junior consultant to the Digital Asia Hub Thailand, where she helped incubate the AI Governance Clinic, and was a research associate at the TUM Professorship for Public Policy, Governance and Innovative Technologies.

Her main interests focus in the field of emerging technologies in neuro-engineering and the intersection with societal issues, including the normative implications of neurotechnology and bioethics.

Constanze is currently doing her master's program in Neuroinformatics at the ETH Zurich University in Switzerland, focusing on bioelectronics for brain pathologies and decision making.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Salma Abdelgawad



Citizenship: USA

District 15

Pursuing bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering with a minor in mathematics at Central Michigan University, USA

Salma Abdelgawad is a senior undergraduate student at Central Michigan University (CMU), where she is a member of the honors program, majoring in mechanical engineering and minoring in mathematics.

At CMU, Salma has conducted research in various areas. She is a member of the Solids, Waves, Intelligence and Mechanics (SWIM) Lab in which she is working on a collaborative project to create a machine learning algorithm to detect fluid-filled inclusions within solid formations. This project can be applied to detecting underground sinkholes and the knowledge gained during the research can be expanded to detect fluid cysts within human bodies.

Additionally, Salma is working on a biomaterials project in her materials science lab, creating electrochemically deposited calcium phosphate coatings on magnesium alloy AZ31 to create corrosion-resistant bone implants. The success of this project will lead to further knowledge regarding medical devices and can reduce the need for additional surgeries.

Salma is excited to continue her research studies and looks forward to graduate school. After completing her Ph.D., she plans on working as a professor serving as a mentor and role model for young women in STEM. Conducting research with young females is a goal of Salma's and she is looking forward to seeing the bright future of women in STEM.

Outside of engineering, Salma enjoys swimming, playing tennis and participating in outreach events.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Sarina Todd



Citizenship: New Zealand and Japan District 16

Pursuing bachelor's degree in mechatronics engineering at University of Auckland, New Zealand

Sarina Todd is entering her honours year earning a bachelor's degree in mechatronics engineering (Hons) at the University of Auckland. She is passionate about encouraging and supporting young women and gender-diverse individuals to pursue a career in STEM.

As the co-founder/director of Women in STEM NZ, Sarina aims to inspire girls through showcasing incredible women role models. Leading outreach visits and STEM workshops, she seeks to foster passion for these disciplines in the youth of her community and country.

For the past three years, Sarina has been involved in organizing Enginuity Day, an event showcasing the wonders of engineering. Her commitment to fostering a culture of innovation and inclusivity extends to her role as chair of the STEM Workshop Committee for the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Women in Engineering (IEEE WIE) International Leadership Summit 2023.

At her university Sarina is the vice president of the Mechanical and Mechatronics Student Association (MECHA), chair of Finance and Operations for the Women in Engineering Network (WEN), and women's representative for the Faculty of Engineering. She is the recipient of the 2023 Major Blues Award for Outstanding Contribution to Service and Leadership, the North Harbour Club Arts, Innovation, Music, Education, Sport and Service to the Community (AIMES) Emerging Talent Award for Innovation, and is a graduate of the Dean's Leadership Programme.

Sarina was selected as one of 150 young leaders from around the world to attend UNITE 2030, a leadership program in New York, under full sponsorship from her faculty and department. Aspiring to become a leader in the industry, Sarina is resolute in her commitment to championing equity in STEM.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Kristel Gayle Abriol



Citizenship: Philippines District 17

Pursuing a bachelor's degree in applied mathematics with specialization in mathematical finance and a minor in data science and analytics at Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

Kristel Gayle Abriol is in her final year of pursuing a bachelor's degree in applied mathematics with specialization in mathematical finance at the Ateneo de Manila University. She is part of a group that works on a study that aims to identify profitable trading strategies in the Philippine Stock Market through a transcriptomic technique.

Since freshman year she has been a scholar of the university and the government. She believes these scholarships help her build the kind of life she envisions to live – one that is not only concerned with herself, but also, and more especially, with others.

After finishing her bachelor's degree, Kristel plans to pursue a master's degree in the same program at the same university. After which, she seeks to secure a career as a financial analyst, data scientist or actuary. She believes that furthering her education in the program will mold her to be a more competent professional in STEM afterward. She simply wants to be more, so she will do more.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Abigail Dogbe



Citizenship: Ghana
District 18

Pursuing a master's degree in information technology at the University of Cincinnati, USA

Abigail Dogbe is an open source community builder, programs manager and STEM education advocate from Ghana. She loves the power that technology can put in people's hands and wants to help create more awareness through community building, research and advocacy. Her belief in open source's potential to drive innovation and positive change encourages her to dedicate time and effort in promoting collaboration, sustainability and inclusivity within open source communities.

She contributes to the Python and Django Software Foundations in various ways, including public speaking, organizing events, and curating programs that foster healthy community building, and as a result, has been named a fellow at the Python Software Foundation and an individual member at the Django Software Foundation.

As a graduate student at the University of Cincinnati, Abigail's research work focuses on improving diversity, equity and inclusion in open source community leadership. Through her studies and practical experiences, she has gained a deep understanding of research methodologies to effectively co-design tools to be used by open source communities. In addition to her thesis work, she is conducting research and providing digital skills to residents of the Avondale community in Cincinnati as a research assistant at the Smart Synergies Lab.

When she is not contributing to open source, Abigail is inspiring the next generation of women in STEM at Mesrenyame & FRIENDS, a girls in STEM project aimed at equipping young girls with the community, technical and soft skills they need to excel in STEM fields.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Katarina Pichna



Citizenship: Finland and Slovakia District 20

Pursuing a master's degree in industrial engineering and management at Aalto University, Finland

Katarina Pichna is a master's student in industrial engineering and management at Aalto University in Finland. She began her studies by completing her bachelor's in information technology. During this time, she focused on contributing to the telecommunication industry by working at two positions at Nokia.

In her first position, Katarina worked in network planning and contributed to the network upgrades in eastern Finland. In the second position, she worked in 5G Research and Development focusing on field measurements of the latest 5G technologies.

Through this work experience, Katarina specialized in downlink multi-user MIMO Wireless Technology and also wrote her thesis on the topic, on which she received the highest grade and graduated with honors. In addition to this, Katarina worked as a teaching assistant at the university in the mathematics department teaching the course differential and integral calculus 2 to second-year students.

Beyond her professional and academic commitments, Katarina has always shown a strong interest in sports. She competed in ultimate frisbee on an international level, and ended her career in 2017 after winning the Women's European Championships. Today, she plays sports recreationally by actively bouldering, doing yoga and running.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Deborah Carlander



Citizenship: Sweden
District 21

Pursuing master's degree in game development at the University of Keio, Tokyo

Deborah Carlander graduated with a bachelor's degree in game development with a design focus from the University of Skövde, Sweden in 2022. For her bachelor's thesis, she crafted an anxiety-reducing mobile game tailored for women with autism, incorporating cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) exercises as game mechanics. Her thesis merited the University of Skövde's Diversity Achievement Scholarship for 2023, an award reserved for exceptional theses that exhibit a commitment to diversity and equality.

Inspired by her thesis work, Deborah pursued advanced studies in game development with a focus on serious games for her master's degree. During her program, she has collaborated on a game project designed for girls aged 7-12 with autism and/or ADHD, aiming to empower its players and raise awareness about the challenges faced by girls with the diagnoses.

During her studies, she had internships at two different game companies, where she primarily served as a game system designer. In January 2024, Deborah began her third internship at the Japanese game company Cygames. There she will write her thesis on the utilization of large language models (LLMs) as tools for game designers specializing in role-playing games, while also attending her last semester at Keio University in Tokyo.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Shayna Spencer



Citizenship: Australia District 22

Pursuing dual bachelor's degrees in mechanical engineering and industrial design at Griffith University, Australia

Shayna Spencer is a fourth-year student at Griffith University (Gold Coast, Australia) pursuing a dual degree in mechanical engineering and industrial design. Prior to starting her degree, she explored various industries trying to find her passions. She loved problem-solving, math and science and wanted to work in a field where she was working toward addressing climate change.

Meeting an engineer in her mid-20s inspired Shayna to pursue engineering. She has consistently excelled in her courses, receiving academic excellence awards each year and gaining admission to the prestigious Griffith Honours College, which comprises the top two percent of students.

During her academic journey, Shayna discovered a deep passion for teamwork, learning from others and collaborative efforts. Beyond the classroom, she actively engages in extracurricular activities to work with diverse teams and contribute to positive change. Recognizing the gender gap in engineering, and the importance of diversity of thought when working toward complex global challenges, Shayna took on the role as chair of the Griffith University Women in Engineering club in the second trimester of her studies. In this capacity, she has led initiatives to support, encourage and celebrate women in engineering and those aspiring to join the field. Her efforts were recognized with the Griffith University Student Guild Award for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion.

Shayna is eagerly looking forward to completing her degree and applying the knowledge and experiences she has gained to work toward a better future and contribute to sustainable solutions through engineering.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Beth Thompson



Citizenship: Australia
District 23

Pursuing bachelor's degree in psychology at Edith Cowan University, Australia

Beth Thompson holds a bachelor's degree in education and a graduate certificate in lower secondary mathematics and is a regional ambassador for the Mathematical Association of Western Australia. Beth is currently collecting mathematical and behavioral data on land and marine life to inform STEM modules for primary and high schools. She is revolutionizing the access of life-long, community-based learning for rural students to help them develop to their full intellectual capacity.

For National Science Week 2023, Beth contributed to the Taxonomy Tournament Database of Indigenous Flora. The project originated at Murdoch University in Perth, Whadjuk Noongar Country. To make the project culturally responsive and applicable to students outside of the metropolitan area, Beth coordinated the Southwest arm, including collaboration with the Wardandi Noongar Cultural Custodian on location-specific knowledge. Beth then focused on the critically endangered Western flat butterfly. She discovered the butterfly relied on one food source, the black-eyed Susan, and that this had been replaced by an introduced variety. She involved nurseries, community organizations and land care groups to locate and germinate native species. Her goal is to reestablish the butterfly population endemic to the Southwest of Australia.

Beth's interdisciplinary knowledge base includes education, mathematics, language development and Indigenous STEM inquiry. She is currently completing a bachelor of psychology, specializing in addiction studies at Edith Cowan University. Beth plans to combine her knowledge of marine life with psychology to conduct research into cognitive trauma, including the effect of subconscious rumination on learning.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Sapphire Stewart



Citizenship: Australia District 24

Pursuing bachelor's degree in engineering systems, civil (honours) at Southern Cross University, Australia

Sapphire Stewart is an Australian citizen with a passion for STEM, specifically in civil engineering. Beginning her professional life as a vet nurse from 2016 to 2022, Sapphire earned her veterinary nursing certificate in 2019. In 2021, she started a new academic chapter, pursuing a bachelor's degree in engineering systems, civil (honours) at Southern Cross University.

Her commitment to both education and practical experience led Sapphire to a pivotal role on the Coffs Harbour Bypass project in 2022, marking the beginning of her career in civil engineering as a scholar. By August 2023, she transitioned into a project officer position on the same project, showcasing her rapid growth within the field.

Sapphire's commitment and dedication extends to volunteering with the New South Wales State Emergency Service (NSW SES), honing skills crucial in civil engineering, staying calm under pressure and effective teamwork.

Outside of the professional realm, Sapphire finds joy in camping and fishing, sharing these outdoor pursuits with her partner and two dogs, Bruno, a border collie, and Duke, a boxer.

Sapphire's dedication to civil engineering, commitment to gaining hands-on experience, and active involvement with the NSW SES showcase her initiative and ambition. The Zonta International Women in STEM Scholarship represents a transformative opportunity, providing financial support and recognition, and aiding her journey toward becoming a civil engineer. This scholarship not only propels her forward, but contributes to the larger mission of fostering gender equality and diversity in STEM.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Ananya Sharma



Citizenship: India
District 25

Pursuing bachelor's degree in technology in computer science and design at Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, Delhi, India

Ananya Sharma is a fourth-year student at the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology (IIT), Delhi. Her field of study is computer science and design, where she explores the fusion of cutting-edge technology with a creative and empathetic approach to addressing challenges.

Ananya secured her admission to IIT when she achieved an All-India Rank (AIR) of 97 out of 12,000 participants in the Undergraduate Common Entrance Examination for Design. Choosing engineering meant a lack of female support and opposition from the male authorities. Despite that, she secured a three-month long research internship in Natural Language Processing (NLP) at IBM, Bangalore – an opportunity given to 415 students worldwide. With consistent efforts, Ananya was selected as a software engineer under the Global Leadership Acquisition program at a multinational retail company.

Ananya strived to achieve excellence in Java, Python, C++, Github, and Unity Engine. She crafted diverse college-level projects, ranging from artificial intelligence (AI) applications and augmented reality games to a website that connected the elderly to young volunteers. Her proficiency extends to web, app and game development, augmented reality (AR), machine learning (ML) and NLP.

After her graduation, Ananya will presume her position in Tokyo, Japan, setting another milestone in her STEM career. Besides academia, Ananya is trained in the Indian classical dance form, Kathak. She has a keen interest in sketching and writing. She loves to swim and whenever free, she enjoys playing chess.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Johanna Spansel



Citizenship: Germany
District 27

Pursuing master's degree in renewable energies focusing on wind energy systems at Hamburg University of Technology, Germany

Since middle school, Johanna Spansel knew she wanted to study a STEM subject with a focus on sustainability. To reconcile her scientific interests with her social and intercultural interests she volunteered in a children's home in Sucre, Bolivia for a year before starting her bachelor's degree.

Voluntary service is part of Johanna's career. She has continued connecting with Bolivian volunteers working as regional coordinator. She is also part of her faculty's student council and is a representative in the university's student parliament.

During her studies, Ananya embraced her love of passing on her knowledge to other students by working as a tutor. Currently, she works as an assistant editor for the scientific journal Biomass Conversion and Biorefinery. This work in the scientific field supports her interest in continuing her studies with a Ph.D.

One of Ananya's goals is to make the global energy supply more sustainable in the future. She desires to accomplish this while also having global accessibility and in alignment with and contributing to the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Striving to gain more experience working in intercultural teams, she will spend a semester abroad in Medellín, Colombia in 2024.

In her free time, Ananya enjoys swimming, crafting and cooking with her flat mates.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Sophia Schulz



Citizenship: Germany
District 28

Pursuing bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering at Technische Hochschule Mittelhessen, Germany

Sophia Schulz has developed a keen interest in complex technical matters and at the same time pursues social tasks and projects diligently.

Before enrolling in her mechanical engineering program, Sophia successfully completed a three-year apprenticeship in ship mechanics, enabling her to develop both technically and socially, in addition to pursuing her passion for seafaring. The blend of nautical and technical matters provided Sophia a highly unique and distinctive experience. Her firsthand experience of the importance of teamwork within a ship's crew of diverse cultural, ethnic and educational backgrounds built awareness and demanded tolerance and the willingness to set aside individual needs during weeks at sea.

Additionally, Sophia actively participates in her department's curriculum as a tutor. Supporting fellow students in their academic orientation while deepening her knowledge and gaining insights into the role of an educator offers her further personal and academic perspectives for a potential career path and provides a much-needed role model for the underrepresented group of female students.

Throughout her own life, Sophia has received guidance and inspiration from mentors and becoming a role model herself is a driving force. Her active membership in the local volunteer fire department and her leadership of the children's fire department constitute a significant part of her leisure activities. There, she introduces young people to the workings of the fire department as part of her commitment to social responsibility and service engagement.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Ema Šujster



Citizenship: Croatia District 29

Pursuing bachelor's degree in computer science and engineering (honors) at Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands

Ema Šujster's journey is marked by a relentless pursuit of meaningful development in the world of technology. She aspires to make an impact in this field while also nurturing her passion for the arts.

Ema completed her primary and middle school education in Samobor, Croatia, and her high school education at Vienna International School in Vienna, Austria. This journey allowed her to experience diverse educational systems and cultures, broadening her horizons.

Upon graduating from high school, Ema moved to Eindhoven, Netherlands, to pursue a bachelor's degree in computer science and engineering. She is part of the High Tech Systems Honors Track, as a member of a select robotics group. This year, Ema and her team are focusing on writing a research paper about home care robots.

Ema is also committed to the student team, Serpentine, specializing in AI, since her first year in Eindhoven. She has served as a board member as the secretary and commissioner of external affairs and is currently serving as the chair of the public relations committee - being actively engaged in complex projects, hackathons and competitions.

Ema's interests extend far beyond STEM. She has been pursuing classical music education since the age of six, demonstrating her commitment to the arts. She possesses a diverse set of hobbies that reflect a well-rounded personality, appreciating the balance between science, sports and creativity.

Ema's application for the Women in STEM Scholarship originates from her aspiration to break gender barriers and promote diversity in STEM.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Beatrice Raviolo



Citizenship: Italy

District 30

Pursuing master's degree program in chemistry and pharmaceutical technology at the University of Turin, Italy

From a young age, Beatrice Raviolo has been captivated by the world of science, driven by its potential to improve people's lives. This passion led her to pursue a master's degree in a field that equips her with comprehensive academic and practical skills in the pharmaceutical field, giving her indispensable multidisciplinary skills required for designing novel medicines.

Beatrice's passion for challenges led her to participate in competitions that allowed her to benchmark her skills with students nationwide. Additionally, Beatrice volunteered in England with the British Earth Foundation, a charity organization focused on fundraising for cardiovascular disease research. Her commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion in STEM fields is demonstrated through her role as president of the student association AISFA Torino. This organization aims to connect students nationally and across Europe, focusing to bridge the gap between academia and the professional world.

Upon completing her bachelor's degree, Beatrice aspires to further her education with a master's or doctorate in pharmaceutical chemistry, enriching her knowledge in the research and development of new drugs and innovative therapies with profound social implications, such as Alzheimer's or AIDS.

Beatrice loves spending time with her family and dog. She also tries to carve out some time to attend dance performances at the theater, a hobby that connects her to her past as a dancer.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Tzu-Hsun Tseng



Citizenship: Taiwan, Republic of China
District 31

Pursuing bachelor's degree in electronics and electrical engineering at National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University in Taiwan

Tzu-Hsun Tseng is a third-year electrical engineering student at National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University in Taiwan, focusing on embedded systems and web development. As a Google STEP intern, she applies her academic knowledge in web development projects. On campus, Tseng demonstrates initiative through several leadership roles. As president of the Maker Club, she organizes workshops and camps for high school and university students to gain hands-on engineering experience. She also maintains the website for the school's career fair to bridge industry and academia. Most notably, Tseng founded NICHE, a group promoting women's advancement in tech fields by facilitating open dialogue between female students and professionals.

Through the Women@Google program, Tseng receives mentorship from female engineers, bolstering her confidence and reaffirming her passion for electrical engineering. The experience inspires her to pay it forward by addressing gender gaps in STEM. Tseng plans to host hackathons focused on executing practical projects and prototyping hardware solutions, promoting collaboration and addressing the lack of hardware-oriented competition at the university level.

Tseng aspires to pursue graduate studies, delving deeper into signal processing techniques across communication, imaging and data analytics and plans to research methods to improve signal processing efficiency and accuracy. The Zonta International Women in STEM Scholarship supports Tseng's academic goals and her work empowering women in STEM. Driven by mentorship and her vision to foster community, Tseng is committed to raising awareness of gender inequities in tech and providing hands-on learning for students.



2023 Women in STEM Scholar

Seungmin Koo



Citizenship: South Korea
District 32

Pursuing master's degree in business informatics at the Hanyang University, Republic of Korea

Seungmin Koo is a dedicated master's student at Hanyang University, specializing in management information systems with an emphasis on text mining. Her academic pursuit centers on identifying key issues and presenting informed solutions by meticulously analyzing challenges within the complex business landscape, particularly in the realm of platform businesses and data-driven decision making through text-mining techniques.

With a prior business degree, Seungmin gained three years of invaluable experience as an online e-commerce platform merchandiser, highlighting the importance of data-driven decision making. Driven by this insight, she returned to academia with a desire to understand the multifaceted processes of issue definition, analysis and resolution within the online domain - all rooted in data.

Seungmin's aspirations go beyond academics, focusing on unraveling nuanced factors contributing to unmet needs and pain points. She aims to provide customized, interconnected and enriched experiences to customers and users. She envisions applying her knowledge to design practical services that leverage company data for transformative customer experiences.

Outside her academic pursuits, Seungmin enjoys singing and maintains a dedicated gym routine. She also indulges in cinematic and television content, with "The Good Place" being her favorite recommendation. This blend of intellectual curiosity and personal interests positions her as a well-rounded individual ready to make a significant impact in her field.