



shooting stars foundation
Educate | Empower | Enable

Monthly Newsletter

October 2020

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ONLINE HACKATHON

In October 2020, Shooting Stars Foundation partnered with **AMGEN** to conduct **The Equal Opportunity Hackathon**. The event attracted **250 registrations worldwide** with **25% from underserved communities**. **Una Krisnan**, SSF volunteer, led **47 Amgen employees** to participate in the hackathon as organizers, mentors, speakers and judges. During the 12-hour hackathon, 27 technology projects were created to solve some problems that are currently affecting the lives of many people in the world – access to healthcare, mental health, diversity, inclusion and belonging, ways to celebrate festivals, birthdays and anniversaries during COVID. Participants gushed about their experience. They learned to collaborate with peers from diverse backgrounds and varying levels of coding knowledge, understanding and leveraging each other's strengths. They also learned new programming languages and applied and enhanced their coding skills by creating an app or a website to solve a problem affecting many people. They made lasting relationships – friends and mentors, through the hackathon; and many teams plan on continuing to work on their hackathon projects. Mentors and judges found it rewarding for this skill-based online volunteering opportunity to impact young lives and to give back to the community. They want more ! Thank you, **Una**, for facilitating this event. **Amgen generously donated \$10,000** for this event, **sponsoring 10 scholars for their college education**.



"I am excited to see what others created and to work with friends who share goals that I have."

Thinura

I'm excited to finally make a project of my own. I'm also excited that I'm learning coding as I do it rather than just a boring lesson guide.

Alex

Exciting experience! Learned to designed and built from scratch and learned a lot about festivals and holidays too while researching on the topic!

Mariyah

I'm excited because it's my first Hackathon ever, and I really like the idea that my team has come up with.

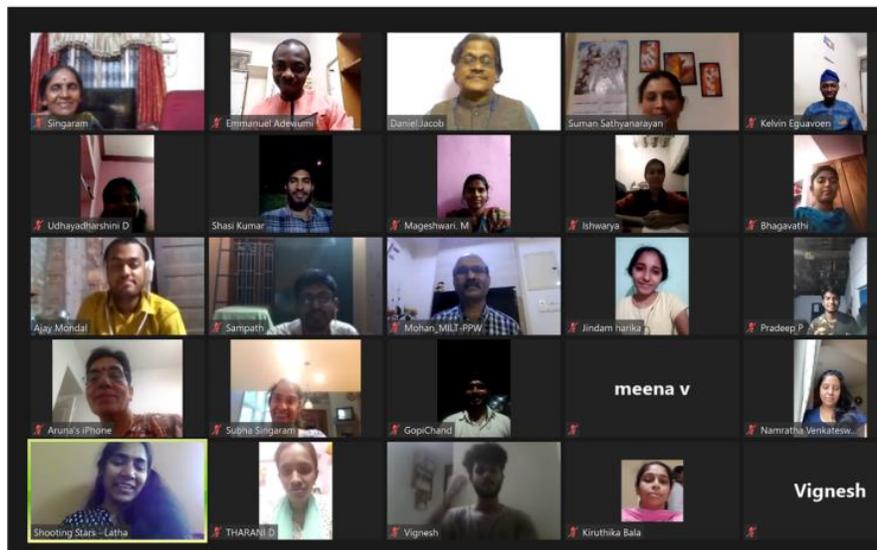
Kyna

Huge kudos to the SSF Event leaders – **Ansh** and **Tevin** who worked tirelessly for 3 months on this , as well as tech mentors - **Lucas, Sam, Adwit, Harini, Tanay, Asif, Vishal, Abhi,** and **Varnit** who helped out the entire day of the hackathon !



LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR SCHOLARS

As part of SSF commitment to nurture our scholars holistically, we arranged a leadership training with **MILT (McGrath Institute of Leadership Training)** for **15 final year SSF scholars worldwide**. **Mr. Daniel Jacob**, the experienced trainer, focused on confidence building, strong public speaking skills, facing challenges with the right positive spirit, human values, relations, overcoming fear, and managing criticism. At the last meeting, SSF volunteers from around the world attended the final presentation, which included cultural performances from each scholars' countries of origin. We thank **Suman** and **our beloved late Kirthi** for organizing the successful training. In Suman's words, "*When they were asked to speak about the turning point in life, so many of them spoke about SSF and how the scholarship they received made a life changing impact on them and their family burden. It was indeed a proud moment hearing about it, some even called it magical moment.*"



DONOR HIGHLIGHT



Kavitha and Vincent sponsored **Hajira**, a medical student at MBBS India. In their words, "Mentoring our scholar, Hajira, is a pleasure. We wanted to sponsor a medical student and preferably a girl because we have two sons. It is with pride that we watch Hajira work towards her MBBS degree. We mostly keep in touch through WhatsApp where it is easy to video call as well as send messages. During these trying pandemic times, we make sure she knows we are thinking of her and we reassure her that we will always be there for her not just as her sponsors but as a source of support, encouragement and comfort."

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Fireside chat with **Ansh Gupta**, 2020-2021 High School President of Shooting Stars Foundation.

1. What do you love about your team?

I love that even though my team is sometimes faced with incredulous tasks or hard deadlines, our resourcefulness definitely brings us together to continue to make high quality programs.

2. How do you keep yourself and your team motivated?

I get very motivated about SSF when I finish a project! Seeing the happy faces of the participants as well as the charity donations helps me to continue doing what I do. I'm quite sure that my team feels the same.

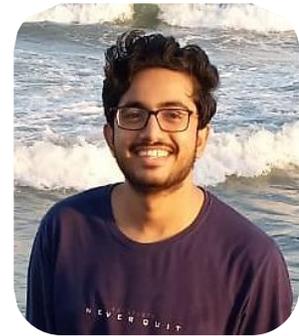
3. If you weren't leading SSF, what would you be doing?

Probably coding and doing a lot more hackathons. Never stop hustling!

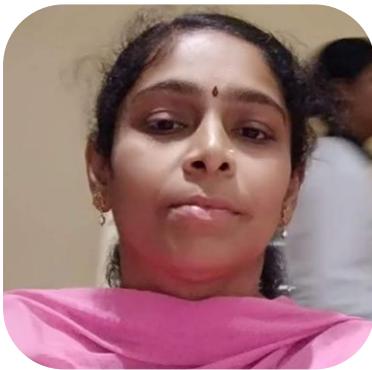
Did you know? In August 2020, Ansh's team won \$3000 in an international hackathon. He donated his cash prize to SSF and 'adopted' **Bharat** to do **Aerospace Engineering at IIT Madras, India**. In his words, *"I loved that although he had little money to support his ambitious dreams, he never gave up and is now working towards getting a job at NASA!"*

SCHOLAR HIGHLIGHT

Bharat is a 3rd year **Aerospace Engineering** student at **IIT Madras, India**. He is a competent, self-reliant, and ambitious young man. He is currently doing a research internship at **Space Robotics** and very interested in **Artificial Intelligence**. He hopes to do his master degree in the US and works for NASA. **Bharat's donor is Ansh**, and they bonded over their passion for computer science and competitions. Bharat is joining a team from IIT Madras to compete at the **Singapore Space Challenge** (<https://www.space.org.sg/challenges/>). Good luck, Bharat !



IN LOVING MEMORY OF KIRTHI 1983 - 2020



We are celebrating the life of **Kirthi**. She was the final connection between Shooting Stars Foundation and the scholars. She spoke to ALL of SSF scholars starting from approving applications, collecting documents, conducting interviews, disbursing funds for their tuition fees, until celebrating their graduation. She fought to get them the needed funds for everything, including recently getting laptops for a few students.

She was extremely meticulous in her work and regarded SSF as her life's calling ! She would be missed tremendously, not just as a colleague, but also a friend, mentor, and akka.

May your soul rest in peace, Kirthi.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATA SCIENCE ACADEMY (ongoing camp) - <https://www.nebulayouthcamps.org/data-science-academy>
30 Oct–22 Nov 2020, **\$399**, 4-week program, Every weekend 4–6 PM **US PST**. Final demo on last Sunday.

NEW OFFICERS MEETING, 15 Nov 2020.

SUPERNOVA CAMP (Entrepreneurship in Middle East) - <https://www.nebulayouthcamps.org/online-entrepreneurship>
15–29 Nov 2020, **\$200 EGP**, Sunday - Wednesday, 6.00–7.30 PM **EGYPT Time**.

CYBERSECURITY ACADEMY (Diversity / Inclusive Program) - <https://www.nebulayouthcamps.org/cyber-academy>
4–6 and 11–13 Dec 2020, **\$25**, Classes are on Fri, Sat, Sun, 4–6pm **US PST**.

VIRTUAL APP DEVELOPMENT CAMP - <https://www.nebulayouthcamps.org/app-academy>
2–31 Jan 2021, **\$65**, 4-weeks program, Every Sat and Sun 1–2 PM **US EST**. Final demo on the 5th Sunday.

Financial aid available for ALL camps. Contact **Dr. Elisa Muresan**, elisam@sstarsfoundation.org for more details.

ALUMNI CORNER

Snekha Saravanan,
SSF Oregon State President, 2015 – 2018

Snekha is currently the Presidential scholar at the University of Oregon. She has gone through the process of applying to countless colleges, and always found supplemental essays to be one of the most important parts of the application process. She offers to **tutor high school seniors with their college application essays!** She will work with anyone on their college essay and offer guidance no matter how far along they are in the process (from brainstorm to final editing). Contact her at [503-739-207](tel:503-739-207) or snehasaravanan@gmail.com.

>>> SHOOTING STARS FUNDRAISER <<<<

COLLEGE ESSAY PREP

All proceeds from the first session donated to Shooting Stars Foundation!!

- Calling all High School Seniors! Start perfecting your college admissions essay today!
- Personalized one on one essay guidance for each student anywhere from brainstorming to final editing!
- Low, affordable prices! Only \$25 per hour, comparable to \$150 or \$200 per hour charged normally.
- Meet the Tutor: Snekha is a Presidential Scholar at the University of Oregon. As a former Oregon President of Shooting Stars, she is passionate about writing and helping those in her community!

BOOK YOUR SESSION TODAY!

(503)-739-4207 Snehasaravanan@gmail.com

REACH OUT TO SNEKHA FOR MORE INFORMATION!

More Ways to Support Shooting Stars Foundation

- **Become a High School Officer** : Lead programs, Social media, Mentor
- **Adopt a Scholar** - Help one student graduate college
- **Professional Mentoring** : Coach Nebula camps
- **Volunteer with Scholars** : Mentor scholars, Teach them life skills
- **Volunteer with SSF** : Run programs, Write content, Manage donors, Promote events !

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