

Letters to a Pre-Scientist

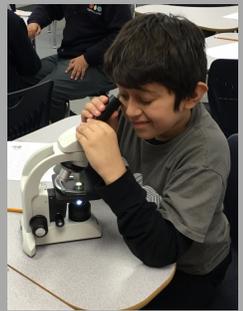
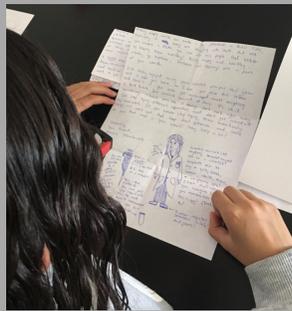
be a friend and an inspiration

Our mission

To inspire and empower students from under-served communities to pursue STEM careers

How we do it

Our year-long program provides a cross-curricular experience where student "pre-scientists" correspond with scientists through four letters to expand their knowledge of science careers while improving their literacy skills and broadening their understanding of world geography and culture.



Our history

Our program was founded in 2010 by Macon Lowman, a sixth grade teacher in rural North Carolina who wanted to change her students' perspectives on who can become a scientist.

Our reach

In 2017-18, we have matched over 650 pre-scientists in 9 classrooms with scientists from 46 states and 18 countries.

Our students

Our students come from high poverty schools, where greater than 60% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

- Students attending high poverty middle schools (where greater than 75% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch) perform on average **90 points worse on standardized assessments of math and science** than their peers in schools where less than 10% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. (1)
- Students from low-income backgrounds are **less likely to graduate from college with a degree in STEM**. Of those who enter, about 30% will leave college without a degree, and another 30% will switch to a non-STEM major. (2)
- The availability of STEM jobs is projected to **increase by 13%** this decade, and already 60% of employers report an inability to find qualified candidates for open positions. (3)



Our program

650

number of middle school "pre-scientists" participating in the program in 2017

820

number of scientists who volunteered to participate as pen pals in the program in 2017

2,400

number of pre-scientists we have worked with in the 8-year history of the program

13

number of part-time volunteers working remotely to ensure the program runs smoothly

(1) Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) - Science for Grades 4 and 8: Student Race/Ethnicity and School Poverty. (2017). Retrieved November 02, 2017, from https://nces.ed.gov/timss/timss2015/timss2015_table42.asp

(2) Chen, X. (2013). STEM Attrition: College Students' Paths Into and Out of STEM Fields (NCES 2014-001). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

(3) Randall, D. (2014, May 16). Increasing Diversity in the STEM Pipeline. Retrieved November 02, 2017, from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/donna-randall/increasing-diversity-in-t_b_5333264.html

Our impact

"Being a pen pal for a pre-scientist was one of the most rewarding things I did last year."

Kevin, 2nd time scientist pen pal

"I like getting a letter from my scientist because it is nice to hear from someone from a different state."

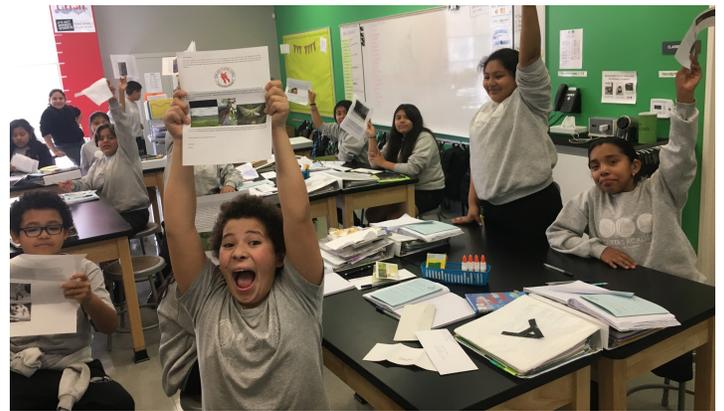
A 5th grade pre-scientist from Ohio

"What I liked most of having a pen pal is that you get to send a letter and the letters you receive lots of times have new information like the tectonic plates colliding."

A 6th grade pre-scientist from California

"This experience instilled that beyond undergraduate or even high school, education is something very important."

Emma, a former pre-scientist, now a college student at the University of North Carolina and scientist pen pal



"I am seeing everything differently now; even just looking at the things around me, I have so many more things I need to know!"

A 6th grade pre-scientist from Chicago after a Letters to a Pre-Scientist-sponsored field trip to Northwestern University

"An incredible opportunity to communicate with young students interested in science!"

Christian, 4-time scientist pen pal

"My scientist encouraged me to be the CEO of Google!"

A 6th grade pre-scientist from California

"I could learn about what different scientists do and how they feel about what they do and if they like what they do."

A 5th grade pre-scientist from New York

Our organizing team



Anna Goldstein

Co-founder/Scientist Supervisor



Macon Lowman

Co-founder/Coordinator Supervisor



Lucy Madden

Project Director/Teacher Supervisor



Aliyah Weinstein

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Reach us

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