



Changing the Lives of Students...*One Squad at a Time!*

November 2014

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About This Newsletter

You will learn how MSCA helps increase the diversity of our future California workforce by preparing girls and underrepresented minority students to build STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) skills.

Welcome from Our Program Director

Welcome to the MSCA Student Tech Leadership Newsletter



We are so proud that we just celebrated our [10th anniversary!](#) When MSCA first started in 2004, we were located in five middle schools in Silicon Valley. Today, MSCA has **140 sites throughout California**. Our program is located in schools and community centers in 60 school districts and 20 counties from rural Humboldt County to the urban centers of Southern California. We are also proud to say that in 2014-2015, we will **serve nearly 4,000 students**.

But we can't do this work alone -- we need your help to make up the funding gap between what schools pay and the actual costs to provide MOUSE Squads. **In order to keep MOUSE Squad accessible to all students, schools only pay one third of the cost, and MSCA has a commitment to fundraise the rest.** We need your support to keep MOUSE Squad in schools throughout California!

See the article below "2nd MSCA Friendraiser Recap" to learn more about how you can get involved in making a difference for our students.

Every day, MSCA youth in 4th-12th grades are learning technology skills and taking on leadership roles within their communities. They are providing IT support to their schools, coaching their teachers on the latest software, creating mobile apps and designing their own video games. MOUSE is also paving the way for greater diversity in our tech workforce. Given the alarming lack of women and minorities found in today's technology workforce, we strive to reach students in high-need school districts who may not otherwise have access to technology programs. 60% of our students are low-income, 40% are girls and 60% are African-American or Latino. Through this work, **MOUSE Squad students are supporting nearly 70,000 students and 4,000 educators.**

We hope you enjoy reading about MSCA's successes and opportunities. This is a critical time to support greater diversity in our technology sector, and MSCA is working everyday to provide all students with technology education that opens the door to countless opportunities.

2nd MSCA Friendraiser Recap

SF Giants Weren't the Only Winners on October 29th!

Our Friendraiser event on Wednesday, October 29th helped kick off our year-end funding drive to raise \$35,000 to sustain our existing MOUSE Squads at California schools.

Can you help us reach our goal? For every dollar that schools pay for our programs, we need to raise \$2 to sustain and grow MSCA programs.

Without MOUSE Squad, I don't think I would have ever been into technology, and technology has changed my life.

-MSCA Squad Member, High School student

Quotes like this from students are what inspire us-- their lives, and future career trajectories, are inspired and influenced by the technology skills they are learning -- and sharing -- through their involvement with MSCA.

Take the Next Step

- [Click here](#) to learn more about how your support can directly impact the formation of a new squad.
- To host a Friendraiser at your location, please contact Jan Half, Program Director at jan@mousesquadca.org.
- View our [Friendraiser pictures!](#)



Donate

Diversity in Action: Christopher STEM Elementary and Leadership Academy

Principal Bill Abraham says, "They don't see it as work, it's almost in disguise. They are just having fun!"



When you walk into the MOUSE Squad room at Christopher STEM, you see a group of 15 youth talking, excited, clumped into groups of four around computers. The first striking aspect is that 14 of the youth are girls. The youth are all wearing their MOUSE Squad shirts and preparing to work on computers in a Kindergarten classroom that have been freezing up lately.

Teacher, Carlos Inda, gathers the group for their daily team building chant, "Go Christopher MOUSE Squad!" From there, they head out to the Kindergarten classroom and work through their problem-solving process to fix the computers.

MOUSE Squad is working to ensure the next generation of technology leaders represent the country's diverse population.

Currently, less than 5% of people working in technology are of Latino or African-American descent and only 30% are women.

Our school partner, Christopher STEM, in South San Jose is working to change this dynamic. The Christopher STEM Leadership Academy focuses on teaching strategies that emphasize community partnerships where students are challenged to think creatively about real-world topics, to solve problems collaboratively and to innovate. 86% of the students are Latino and 52% are English Language Learners. A high percentage are from single-parent households and 84 percent (84%) of students are eligible for the federal free and reduced lunch program.



MOUSE Squad Teacher, Carlos Inda, has been leading the program since 2012 and has seen tremendous changes in the youth. "MOUSE really helps the youth come out of their comfort zone. It helps them feel confident and successful with technology skills while learning to do something on their own. Additionally, many of our families aren't

comfortable with technology and they benefit immensely from their child's learning. MOUSE helps the youth learn to work together and is also great for kids who are behind academically and kids who have trouble connecting."

According to Principal, Bill Abraham, there are specific ways to get underrepresented minorities and girls involved in STEM. "Adults have to build a personal relationship with the kids and encourage them to participate in STEM. A lot of students want to do it, but a friend might discourage them. Peers are such a strong influence and that's why a strong relationship with a teacher is critical."

For girls specifically, Mr. Abraham says, "21st century skills are all about collaboration and communication— areas where girls excel. Girls like to work together and often think STEM equals you and a computer. When you show them it's you and a team they are less intimidated and more interested. They're hooked!"

More STEM News You Can Use

- To learn more about the STEM skills gap, [click here](#) to read another great article!
- To learn about how MSCA is tackling the diversity issue, please [click here](#) to read the MSCA White Paper on Diversity.

Donor Spotlight: Thank You for Your Support!

Thank you to our many generous sponsors, including:

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About MOUSE Squad of California

MSCA is the Student Tech Leadership program of Aspiranet, a CA nonprofit that provides after-school and youth development programs, and children and family services. MSCA is a licensed partner of MOUSE, a New York City-based nonprofit.

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