



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

AIMING FOR THE STARS

SSP International's growth over the past few years has been astronomical, and 2025 reflected that trajectory in every way. In 2025 alone, SSPI:

- Operated internationally for the first time with the expansion of Summer Science Program operations to University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada.
- Increased program capacity once again to welcome a record-breaking 588 summer participants.
- Grew our College Link mentorship program to serve more Summer Science Program alumni as they prepared for college.
- Inaugurated all-new alumni awards to recognize the outstanding leaders in our community.
- Introduced a new virtual seminar series, Curiosity Lab, featuring incredible insights from our alumni and faculty.
- Launched regional alumni groups in both Boston and Washington, D.C.
- Added a Chief Programs Officer to the senior leadership team.
- Announced the launch of a new program in 2026: the STEM Learning Institute.

The strides made at SSPI have been significant, and yet our team remains staunchly committed to maintaining the high level of quality that threads through our legacy. Exit surveys from 2025 Summer Science Program participants continue to echo sentiments expressed by past alumni.

"The best summer of my life."

"Truly changed my life for the better."

"One of those experiences that you'll reminisce about for years."

"Calling SSP life-changing isn't an exaggeration."

"If I lived 100 different lives, I would choose to do the Summer Science Program in every single one of them."

This is the kind of feedback that keeps SSPI committed to providing immersive STEM experiences of the highest caliber. As we enter our 67th year, we are positioned to continue building on our legacy as a leader and pioneer in STEM education thanks to every member of the SSPI community. As our participants remind us every summer: The future is bright.


FRANK STESLOW
CEO


MICHAEL MCKAY '78
Board Chair



SSPI BOARD MEMBERS

As of January 1, 2026

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Frank Ruperto

Sid Shenai

Helen Shin '82

Karl Sun

Michael Weiss '74

Thank you to outgoing board members **Michelle Chang '06** and **Ron Irving '68** for their service on the SSPI Board in 2025.

OUR MISSION

SSP International provides students with immersive, transformational opportunities to learn, do, and belong in science. We envision a world in which science inspires and informs humanity.

CHALLENGE

We engage ourselves and one another, building an environment of constant discovery.

COLLABORATION

We embrace immersive experiences, fostering teamwork, enthusiasm, and innovation.

OUR VALUES

OUR VALUES

INCLUSION

We cultivate an inclusive environment where diversity fuels curiosity and transformation.

COMMUNITY

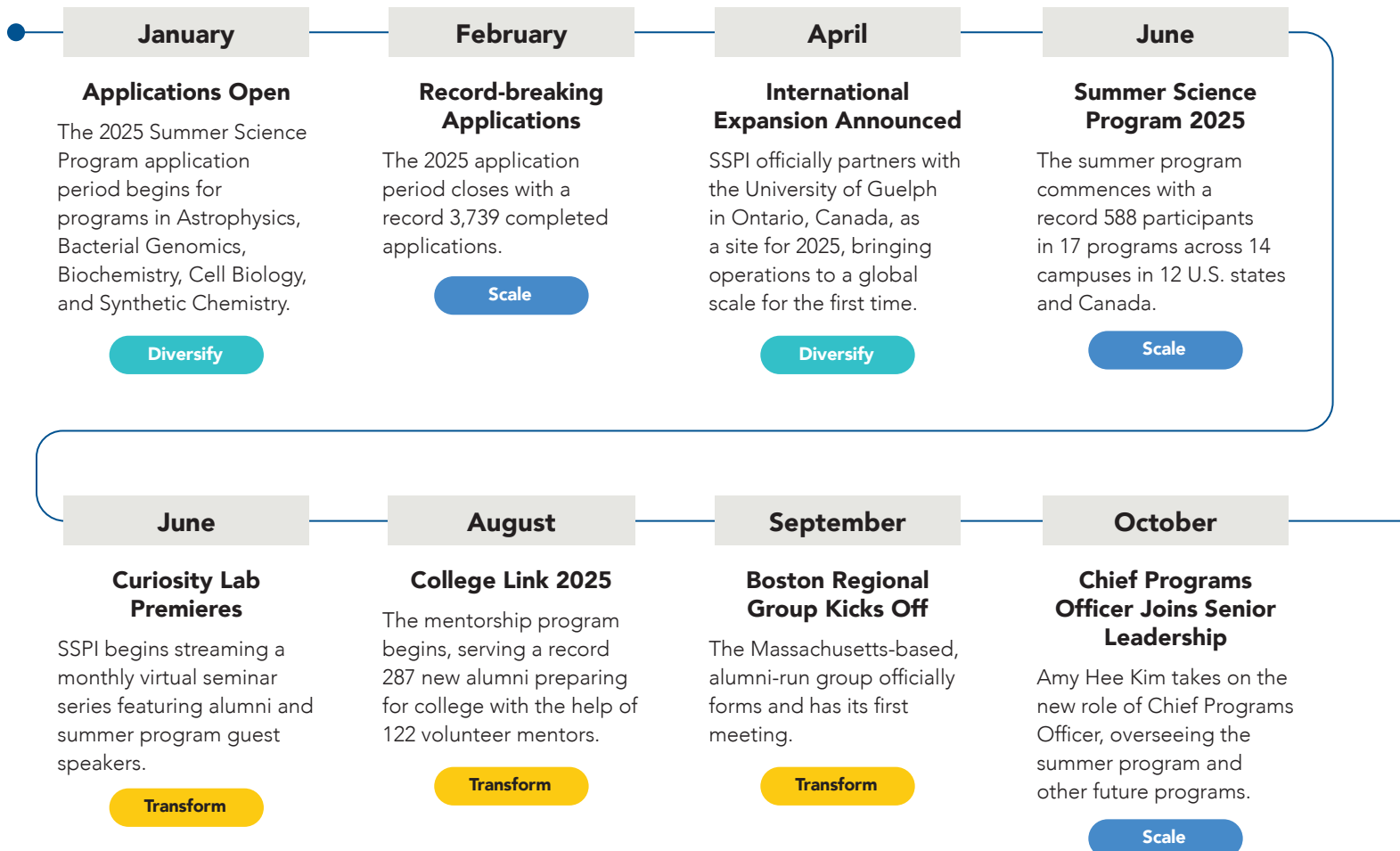
We build lifelong community that thrives on integrity and collective growth.

OUR VALUES

A YEAR OF GROWTH AND MOMENTUM



From record-breaking applications to international expansion and new programs, 2025 marked a year of **significant progress** for SSPI. Each milestone reflects the organization's commitment to our 10-Year Strategic Plan.



November

Inaugural Annual Awards

SSPI presents its first annual awards at the 2025 Alumni Gathering Weekend in San Francisco, including the Legacy Award, the Beacon Award, and the Young Alumni Award.

Transform

November

STEM Learning Institute Approved

The SSPI Board of Directors votes to approve the launch of a new program, the STEM Learning Institute, in 2026. The institute will focus on developing STEM curriculum and training high school educators.

Scale

December

D.C. Regional Group Kicks Off

A D.C.-area, alumni-led group officially forms and begins meeting.

Transform

OUR GOALS

From SSPI's 10-Year Strategic Plan

SCALE

Build a More Scalable Operation for Growth

SSPI aims to create a scalable operation that supports sustainable growth. By strengthening infrastructure and forming strategic partnerships, SSPI will expand the reach of its flagship Summer Science Program and add new, complementary programs. This growth will allow SSPI to reach more students and provide rigorous educational opportunities that inspire future leaders in STEM fields.

DIVERSIFY

Expand Perspectives, Subject Matter, and Revenue

SSPI is committed to increasing the diversity of its participants and the experiences it offers. The organization will increase representation among students and expand curriculum to engage a wider range of learners. SSPI will also diversify funding sources to ensure the long-term sustainability of its programs while raising brand awareness to connect with new communities and supporters.

TRANSFORM

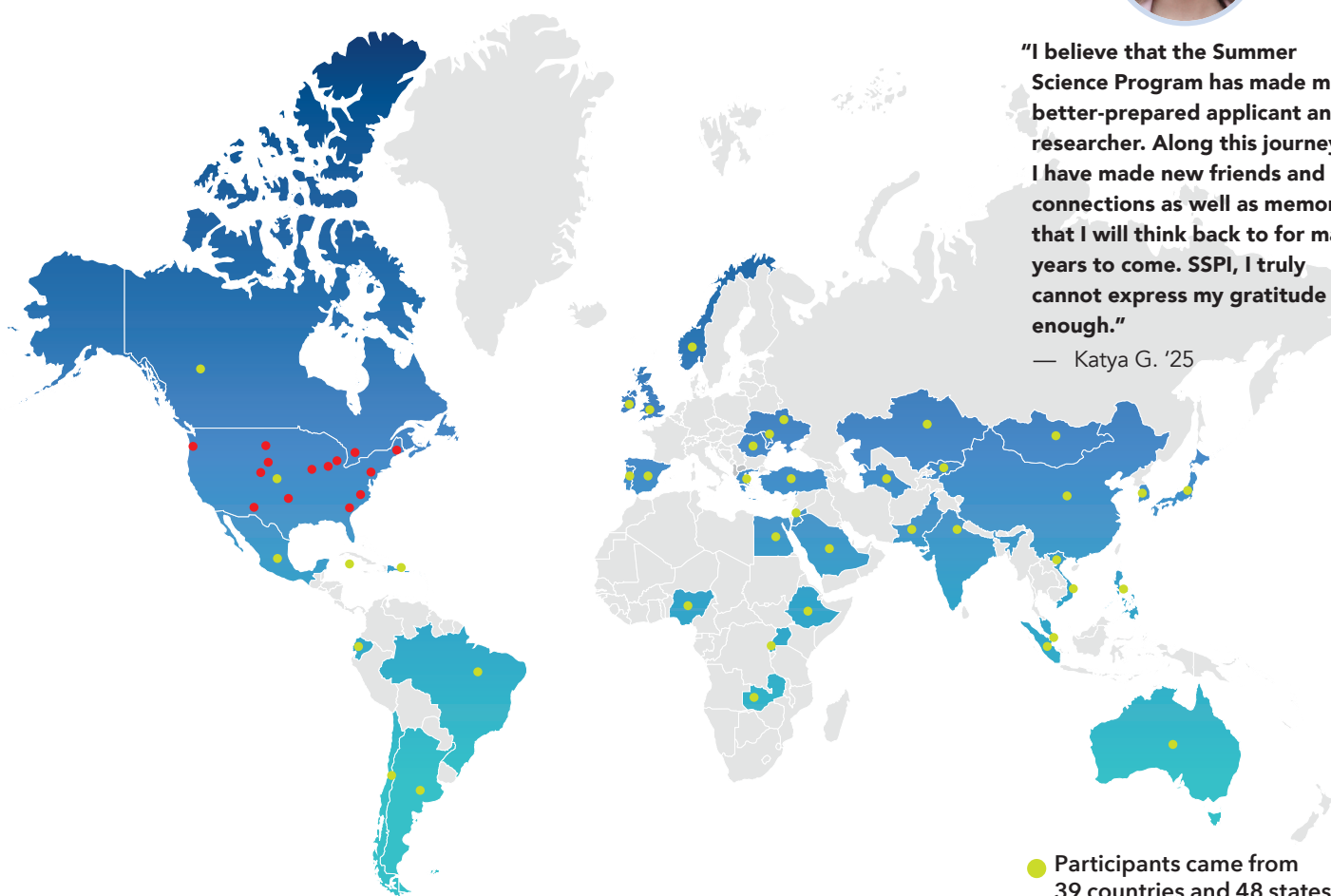
Catalyze Meaningful Change and Growth

At its core, SSPI seeks to catalyze meaningful change in students' lives. SSPI will expand student potential by providing impactful educational experiences that foster critical thinking and scientific curiosity. Through intentional community-building, SSPI strives to inspire a lifelong passion for scientific discovery, ensuring lasting impacts among participants, alumni, staff, and stakeholders. SSPI will ensure programmatic impacts that enhance the quality and relevance of our educational experiences and strengthen its reputation as a leader in science education.



"I believe that the Summer Science Program has made me a better-prepared applicant and researcher. Along this journey, I have made new friends and connections as well as memories that I will think back to for many years to come. SSPI, I truly cannot express my gratitude enough."

— Katya G. '25



- Participants came from 39 countries and 48 states
- Program campus locations

EXPANDING OUR HORIZONS

2025's Summer Science Program set an attendance record and welcomed its **first international** campus.

The Summer Science Program continued its trajectory of recent years: continued growth, consistent quality, and new paths forged.

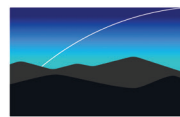
Seventeen programs took place across 14 campuses spread across the continental U.S. and Canada.

For the first time in SSPI history, the organization took operations international with programs hosted at the **University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada**. The

University of Guelph is one of seven new campus partners that welcomed participants this past summer. Programs offered included Astrophysics, Bacterial Genomics, Biochemistry, Cell Biology, and Synthetic Chemistry.

Awareness of and appetite for the Summer Science Program continue to grow. Applications reached an all-time high with 3,739 fully completed, surpassing 2024's record-breaking

completed applications (3,393) despite narrowing eligibility to high school juniors only. Even with participant spots increased to 588 for 2025 (a 63% increase from 2024), the expanding demand continues to outpace SSPI's capacity.



**SUMMER
SCIENCE
PROGRAM**

PROGRAMS

17
PROGRAMS

ASTROPHYSICS
BIOCHEMISTRY
BACTERIAL GENOMICS
SYNTHETIC CHEMISTRY
CELL BIOLOGY

3,739
COMPLETED
APPLICATIONS

588
TOTAL
ENROLLMENT

16%
ADMISSION
RATE

80%
ENROLLMENT
RATE

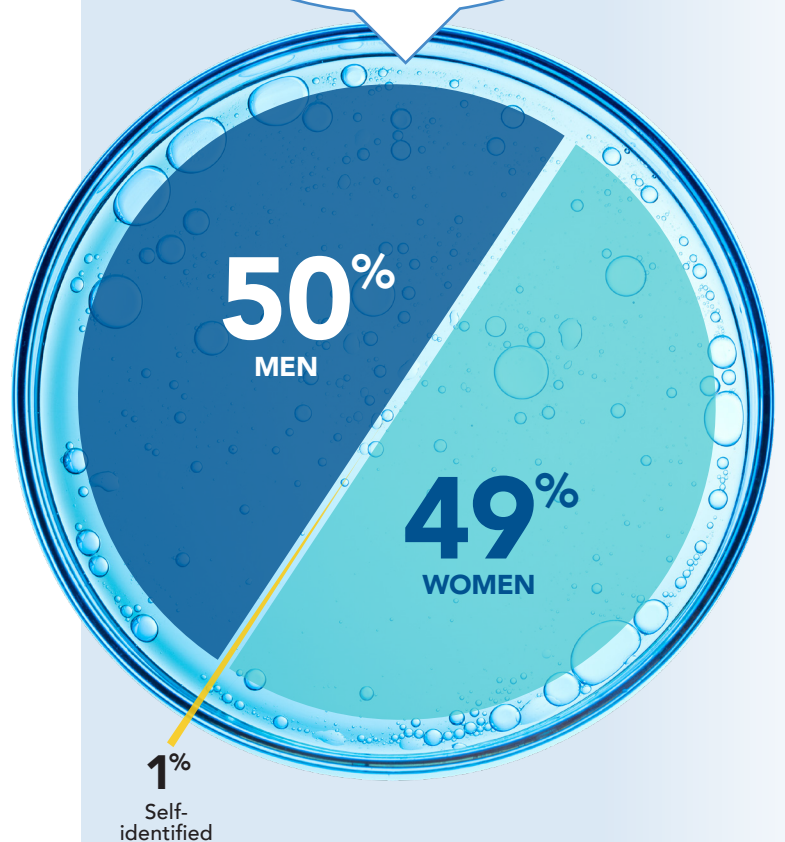
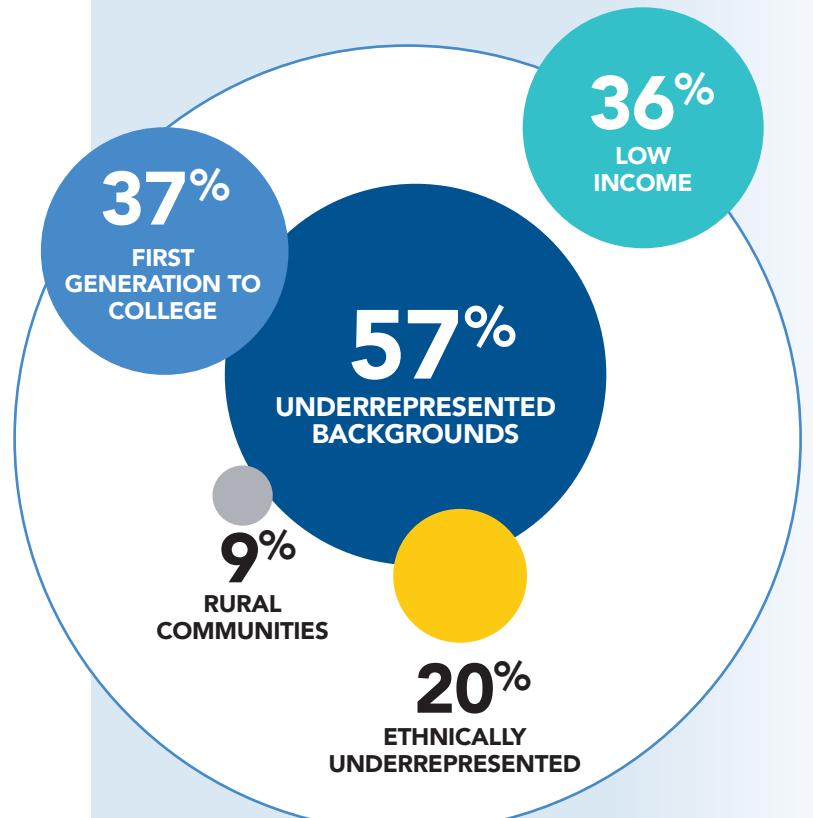
FINANCIAL AID

353
TOTAL RECIPIENTS

213
TOTAL FULL-AID RECIPIENTS

\$3,382,505
TOTAL AWARDED

DEMOGRAPHICS



SCIENCE WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR



When Josh Dillon attended the Summer Science Program in 2004, he remembers his group gaining notoriety for one specific thing.

"We were terrible at guiding the telescope. Like, notably," he admits.

Despite the fact his trio struggled to capture any usable images of their asteroid, Josh says the experience cemented his belief in the importance of collaboration in science as well as his interest in the field.

Josh continued pursuing physics as an undergraduate at Stanford University, followed by completing his Ph.D. in astrophysics at MIT. Now, he works as a research scientist at UC Berkeley, focusing on radio and cosmology in the Radio Astronomy Lab. He also serves as the analysis team leader for the Hydrogen Epoch of Reionization Array, a collaborative radio telescope project to study the early universe.

On the side, however, Josh has another project. In 2010, Josh and some of his friends from high school decided to take a game they had invented and put it on Kickstarter to see if it was marketable.

Over 15 years later, Cards Against Humanity is sold worldwide, with dozens of editions, expansions, and new games.

Whether working on Cards Against Humanity or conducting his astrophysics research, Josh emphasizes the value of collaboration and shared investment that echo his experience back in 2004.

"You get more done when you're not fighting for credit," he says. "And at the Summer Science Program, there really is no fighting for credit because there are no grades. There's no, 'Oh, you had the best asteroid.' It's more about whether you successfully completed the project and that you did so together."

The collaboration and community Josh found at the Summer Science Program have since motivated him to support the organization financially, both due to gratitude for his own experience and his desire to help preserve the program's unique legacy. From Josh's perspective, the program creates something greater than the sum of its parts: an experience that goes beyond the competitive admissions, the passionate applicants, and the high-caliber curriculum.

"The collaboration, the community, and the freedom to be your nerdy self has to matter," Josh says. "It's all too rare of a thing—certainly at most high schools—and it needs to be cherished and nurtured."

INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION

Founded in 2015, the Science Ambassador Scholarship supports women and nonbinary students pursuing degrees in STEM. The program is funded and administered by Cards Against Humanity, using profits from their science-themed card packs to turn humor into meaningful support for future innovators.

- Awarded to five recipients annually
- \$1.5 million in scholarships granted to date
- 100% funded through game sales

"The scholarship is something that I'm particularly proud of. We've been doing it for a decade now, and I've been really grateful to perpetuate that." —Josh Dillon



"The Summer Science Program was this experience of, 'Wow, I have all these peers now' in a way that I didn't feel I had before."

— Josh Dillon

EXPANDING ACCESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Community-based organizations are helping more students discover, apply to, and succeed in the Summer Science Program.

In 2025, SSPI built onto a project started the year prior: establishing formal partnership pathways with nonprofit and community-based organizations (CBOs). Specifically, SSPI has built a growing network of CBO partnerships with groups that provide free educational and college access support to students from underrepresented backgrounds in STEM. These partnerships are guided by a shared agreement focused on making the Summer Science Program admissions process clearer, more supportive, and more accessible for students and their families.

The SSPI Student Success team works closely with partner organizations to answer questions, share resources and information, and streamline the application process, while partners encourage students to apply and help them navigate application and enrollment steps. Partners also play an important role as trusted intermediaries, passing along questions and concerns that cause hesitation among students or families.

Looking forward, the Student Success team is excited to expand this partnership program, working toward broadening access to SSPI programs and strengthening pathways into STEM.

CBO SPOTLIGHT



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: COLLEGE MATCH LA

College Match works with low-income, academically talented students at partner high schools across Los Angeles County, offering two years of personalized support navigating college prep, admissions, and educational opportunities, including the Summer Science Program.

College Match LA became an informal partner in 2023 and helped inform SSPI's current partnership framework. Our relationship with College Match has brought 14 exceptional students to SSPI. For more information, visit collegematchla.org.

THANK YOU, PARTNERS!

Aguila Youth Leadership Institute
Phoenix, AZ

Black Student Fund
National

College Match LA
Los Angeles, CA

Collegiate Academies
New Orleans, LA

Collegiate Directions, Inc.
Bethesda, MD

Ecotek Detroit
Detroit, MI

ELiTE (Emerging Leaders in
Technology and Engineering, Inc.)
New York, NY

Evanston Scholars
Evanston, IL

Guadalupe Center
Immokalee, FL

Kinesis Fundacion
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

REACH Prep
Stamford, CT

Sagely College Advising
South Bend, IN

STEP: Student Expedition Program
Tucson, AZ

TEAK Fellowship
New York, NY

The Challenge Foundation
Englewood, CO

The Opportunity Network
New York, NY

Waukegan to College
Waukegan, IL

PROGRAM IMPACT

Since the pathway's implementation:

55
STUDENTS
ADMITTED

17
ORGANIZATION
PARTNERS

41
STUDENTS
ENROLLED

63
APPLICATIONS
SUBMITTED

THANK YOU, DONORS!

On behalf of the entire SSPI community, we thank the generous individuals and organizations who have chosen to partner with us. Your investment in transformative STEM experiences and the next generation of scientists is making a difference. We see it every summer in our participants whose lives are changed through hands-on research, in our alumni who connect across generations and continue making an impact on the world around them, and in opportunities made possible through your support.

Lists reflect contributions for Fiscal Year 2025 (January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025).

PRESIDENT’S CIRCLE

President’s Circle members have made annual unrestricted contributions of at least \$1,000. These donors have chosen to dedicate their resources to SSPI’s ongoing success, and we could not achieve our mission without them.

\$10,000+

Anonymous (3 donors)	Reagan Moore ‘62	Julie Cotler Pottinger
Neeraj & Papri Agrawal	Philip Nolan ‘76	Henry Roe ‘91
Lauren Blum ‘76	Miruna Oprescu ‘09 & Eric Metodiev	Frank & Stephanie Ruperto
Josh Dillon ‘04	Guy Oranmin & Sharon Rechter	Helen Shin ‘82
Ron Irving ‘68 & Gail Irving		Gordon Stitt ‘73
Michael McKay ‘78		Karl & Lisa Sun

\$5,000-\$9,999

Ricky Balthrop ‘74 & Kerry Balthrop	Charles Daniel Gelatt ‘64	Lisa Wang ‘04
Stephen Blumenkranz ‘67	Barrie Trinkle ‘77	Richard Schumacher ‘74

\$1,000-\$4,999



"I'm just one kid, but there are so many kids who attended the Summer Science Program this summer whose experiences wouldn't have been possible without the contributions of each and every donor. If you had told my 10-year-old self that I would get to spend a summer tracking asteroids, I would have thought you were lying—but the Summer Science Program gave me that amazing opportunity."

— Tyler R. '25

Shannon Anderson '80
Rachel Berk '97
Edmund Bertschinger '75
Jennifer Blankenhorn '74
Scott Bredall &
Janie Yap-Bredall
Daniel Brosnan '59
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George Sharman '62
Siddarth Shenai &
Dr. Teresa Kim
Katherine Staton '76
Frank Steslow
Michael Thacher &
Rhonda Rundle
David Ting '75
Jennine Townsend '78
Beverly Turner – in memory
of Michael Turner '63
Andrew Van Horn '62
Sergei Vassilvitskii '97
Christopher Vinnard '90
Laura Kang Ward '79
Rick & Tamar Weerts
Michael Weiss '74
Michael Wyman '97
Chris Wyman '94

\$500-\$999

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Michelle Chang '06
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Elizabeth Simmons '80
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Van Snyder '63
Dr. Robert Stellingwerf '64
Dr. Lawrence Sverdrup
Dr. Peter Szolovits '65
Kamlesh & Sunita Thalor
Mohan Yin '11

THANK YOU, DONORS!

CORPORATE



"The Summer Science Program was an incredibly immersive research experience and absolutely life-changing. If I lived 100 different lives, I would choose to do the Summer Science Program in every single one of them."
— Anabel W. '25

Agilent	Eli Lilly & Co.	Regeneron
Amsted Industries	Gene Haas Foundation	RTX
Apple Inc.	Genentech	Salesforce
AstraZeneca	Goodwin Family Memorial Trust	SMBC
Bank of America Foundation	Google	State Farm and State Farm Companies Foundation
Brian D & Terri L Green Foundation	IBM	Svelter Charitable Lead Unitrust
Bristol Myers Squibb	Indeed	The Hershey Company
Cisco	Intuit	The Walt Disney Company
Community Foundation of Northern Virginia	Jade Tree Foundation	University of Colorado Boulder
Discord	NVidia	
	Purdue University	

ABELL CIRCLE

Established in tribute to George Abell’s enduring legacy, the Abell Circle recognizes SSPI’s most committed philanthropic leaders. Members have made annual gifts of \$10,000 or more, or lifetime contributions of \$100,000 or more, representing a deep and sustained investment in the organization’s mission.

Abell Circle support is critical to expanding access to the Summer Science Program, with a particular emphasis on funding financial aid so that talented students from all backgrounds can participate. Through their leadership-level giving, these donors help ensure that cost is never a barrier to entry. We are deeply grateful for their vision and generosity in advancing opportunity in STEM.

Anonymous (5 donors)	Henry Lichstein '60	Henry Roe '91
Neeraj & Papri Agrawal	Michael McKay '78	Frank & Stephanie Ruperto
Lauren Blum '76	Reagan Moore '62	Helen Shin '82
Joshua Dillon '04	Philip Nolan '76	Gordon Stitt '73
Ron '68 & Gail Irving	Miruna Oprescu '09 & Eric Metodiev	Karl & Lisa Sun
Susan Jerian '79	Guy Oranmin & Sharon Rechter	Barrie Trinkle '77
Mitchell Kapor '66		Duowei Xu
Eric Korevaar '76	Julie Cotler Pottinger	



LINK TO COLLEGE SUCCESS

In 2025, the College Link Mentorship Program (previously SSP Connect) served a record 287 Summer Science Program alumni through the college application process with guidance from 122 volunteer mentors, including alumni and former faculty of the program.

The program emphasized individualized support during its 13-week duration from September to December. First-generation students were matched one-on-one with mentors, while other participants took part in structured small-group mentoring, typically pairing three mentors with approximately 13 mentees.

Participants engaged in weekly, milestone-based mentoring sessions focused on college essays, college fit,

major selection, networking, and interview preparation. Mentor matches were made intentionally, often based on shared academic interests, backgrounds, or college pathways.

In addition to mentoring, the 2025 program hosted College Admissions Roundtables with admissions officers from leading universities and a dedicated "College on a Budget" session led by SSP International's Director of Admissions Courtney Hill.

Together, these efforts provided hundreds of alumni with structured guidance, timely resources, and access to experienced mentors during the college admissions cycle.

COLLEGE LINK AT A GLANCE

122
MENTORS

287
MENTEES

3:13
(AVERAGE
MENTOR-TO-
MENTEE RATIO)

167
FINANCIAL
AID RECIPIENT
MENTEES (64%)

1,495
TOTAL
MENTORING
MEETINGS

61
INTERNATIONAL
MENTEES (21%)

101
FIRST-GENERATION
COLLEGE MENTEES
(35%), ALL INDIVIDUALLY
MATCHED

MORE THAN A SUMMER OF SCIENCE



When Mark dela Cerna received an email asking him to consider applying to be faculty at the 2025 Summer Science Program, he initially wondered if it might be spam. The assistant professor in biochemistry at Georgia Southern University had never heard of the program, but then his cursory research piqued his interest enough to reply.

"The program went along with my lab philosophy and my own philosophy and seemed like an opportunity to mentor the newer generation," he says.

After wrapping up his first year as an assistant academic director at the Purdue University biochemistry program, Mark describes SSPI's Summer Science Program as an almost overwhelming experience of connection and love of science.

"After the program, I thought, 'I don't think I can handle another summer of this,'" Mark admits. "Not because it's physically exhausting. I actually loved

every aspect of it. But leaving ... When they told us during orientation that there were going to be a lot of tears from the students? No, they were from me."

Heart-wrenching departures aside, Mark is set to return for the 2026 program, this time as the academic director at the biochemistry program at Hendrix College in Arkansas—and with more emotional preparation, he says. One of the aspects he looks forward to is the program's broad diversity.

"At Georgia Southern, the demographics on my campus are very diverse. But when I say that the cohort that I had at the Summer Science Program is probably the most diverse classroom I've ever been in, that's actually very true," Mark says. "It's very nice to see that the face of science is still diverse and we're not shying away from that at SSPI."

Mark's emphasis on diverse perspectives in STEM applies both to the field in general and to personal

development. Ultimately, he says, it's about collaborating with people who bring something new to your awareness.

"It's just getting to know someone whose history is very, very different and unique from yours," Mark says. "And you're all just trying to discover science and discover new things the way you know how."

In the program, he saw his participants experience that personal growth firsthand, encountering peers with backgrounds completely different from their own and adjusting their own assumptions in response. The result, he feels, is a multifaceted experience with far-reaching impact.

"It's exposure to good science, building a network, and at the same time giving them the opportunity to grow in a new environment and, I think, eventually more easily transition to life after high school."



"I care a lot about people and my contribution to society, and I like doing science, but at the same time, I want to have an actual impact. And I've never felt that I had that until I joined the Summer Science Program."

— Mark dela Cerna



Financial Support

- Program Fees: **13.3%**
- Grants and Contributions: **66.9%**
- Investment Income: **19.3%**
- Other Income: **0.5%**

Total: **\$43,207,612**

**includes unrealized gains/losses*

How We Spend Our Funds

- Program: **84.8%**
- Management and General: **10.6%**
- Fundraising and Alumni Relations: **4.7%**

2025 Operating

Expenditures: **\$13,338,659**

As a nonprofit, SSPI carefully manages operational expenses to maximize programmatic impact, delivering unparalleled educational experiences that embody our core values of challenge, collaboration, community, and inclusion.

Financial Stability

- Cash and Investments: **54.6%**
- Promises to Give, Net: **44.1%**
- Other Assets: **0.1%**
- Endowment: **1.2%**

Total Assets: **\$233,434,198**

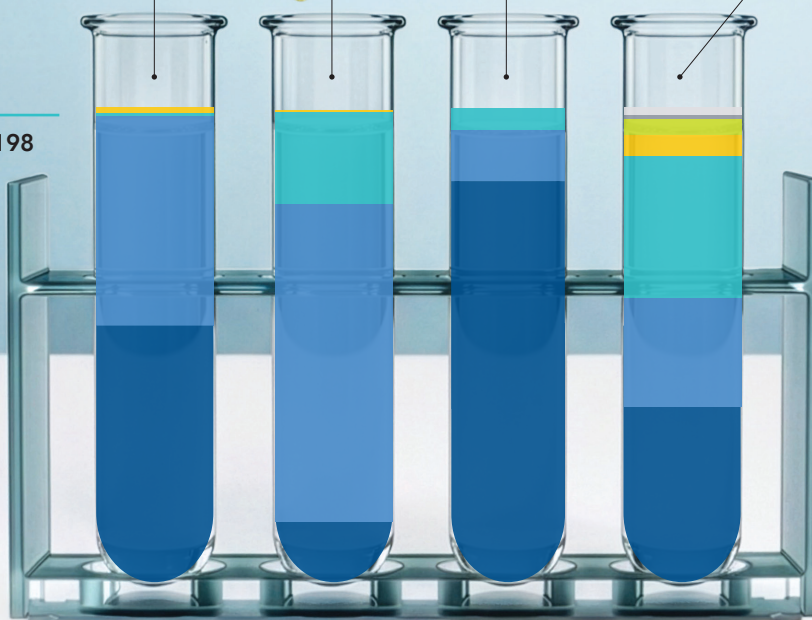
as of September 30, 2025

Investing in Our Program Participants

- Faculty and Supporting Staff: **36.9%**
- Site Expenses: **22.8%**
- Financial Aid and Stipends: **30.1%**
- Professional Fees: **4.3%**
- Travel and Training: **3.4%**
- Supplies and Software: **0.9%**
- Other Expenses: **1.7%**

Total Program Expenses
\$11,304,527

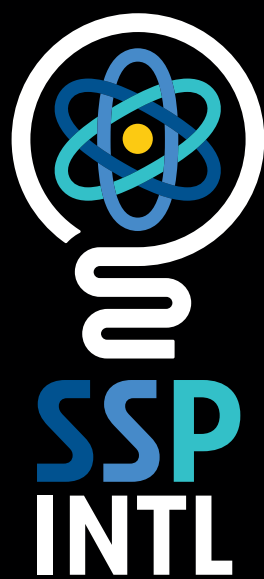
With the support of dedicated individuals like you, SSPI invested \$11.3 million in empowering our participants to learn, do, and belong in science. More than 54% of these funds directly benefited first-generation aspiring college students, rural students, low-income, and/or students from racial backgrounds underrepresented in STEM. This allocation underscores our steadfast commitment to advancing our mission with care, purpose, and sustainability.



In 2025, SSP International, Inc. had gross revenue and public support of \$43.2 million and operating expenditures, including financial aid, of \$13.3 million. Total assets were \$233.4 million. SSPI's operating funds come from three main funding sources: revenues from programs, contributions, and investment income.



Effective January 1, 2025, SSPI changed its fiscal year-end from September 30 to December 31, in order to better align our reporting cycle with our operations. The numbers presented above are for the 12 months ended December 31, 2025. SSP International, Inc. obtained an independent audit of its financial statements for the 15-month period ended December 31, 2025. [Click here](#) or use the QR code to access a copy of the audited financial statements.



SSP.ORG