



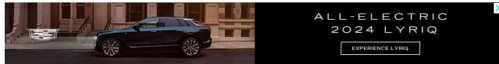
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## EVENT AIMS TO EMPOWER BLACK GIRLS IN STEM AS DEMAND FOR THOSE CAREERS SOAR

Less than 3% of STEM jobs are reportedly now held by Black women, though demand for those careers remains high.



An accomplished engineer, Kara Branch is also focused on helping Black girls gain knowledge about STEM and assisting them in pursuing careers in the field.



An estimated 3.5 million jobs in STEM, or science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, reportedly need to be filled by 2025. Yet under 3% of the sector's jobs are currently held by Black women. Another eye-popping statistic shows that most women working in STEM at the federal level are white (66%) versus about 15% for Black.

Black Girls Do Engineer (BGDE), a nonprofit founded and run by Branch, aims to change the picture. On March 2, BGDE will conduct the 2nd Annual STEM Day for Girls in grades 3 through 12 at Young Women's College Preparatory Academy in Downtown Houston. It aims to bring more girls of color into STEM education and careers through resources, exposure, and representation.

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Some 150 girls ages 8 through 17 have been registered for this year's event, up from 100 a year ago. The registration deadline is Feb. 28; you'll find details [here](#). Calling it a first-of-its-kind event, Branch says it will allow Black girls who have never had hands-on STEM experience the ability to do so in a supportive environment. She added it will be led by Black female STEM professionals.

Branch launched her organization in 2019, feeling concerned that Black American girls and young women were not choosing STEM-related careers and wanting to get more Black girls in the field.

Based in Houston, among the nation's largest cities for Blacks, BGDE also has chapters in Los Angeles and New Orleans. It reports having helped 2,220 girls from kindergarten through college thus far, and scoring \$44,000 in STEM-related college scholarships for BGDE members since its inception.

The event will include 11 hands-on activities focused on robotics, AI, and coding, with students separated by grade/age level. Student attendees can ask panelists about their experiences as women of color in STEM.

Branch and two of her student members recently appeared on [national ABC News](#).

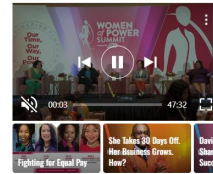
"They can see what STEM means and what a career in STEM looks like from successful professionals in these exploding fields, who can share what the possibilities are," Branch explained.

Indeed, STEM jobs remain among the highest in-demand jobs overall. Per this [report](#), STEM-related jobs pay over \$100,000, especially mathematics and computer positions.

Simultaneously, the application-based academic program is now going into its fifth season, starting October 2024 through May 2025. Registration and applications [open](#) in April 2024 for the October session nationally.

Branch reflected, "From my perspective, I have heard from so many parents that their girls love science, math, or engineering, but there weren't tangible resources to pursue this path, and they found it with us."

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