

# Sirihaasa Nallamothe Awarded EXPLORER Scholarship from Aspire2STEAM.org

*Nallamothe, a high school sophomore from Normal, Illinois, excels in coding and empowering young girls to pursue and persevere in tech-related studies*

DES MOINES, IA, USA, May 27, 2021

/EINPresswire.com/ -- "Sirihaasa Nallamothe is wired to learn, teach, and help others," said Cheryl O'Donoghue, CEO at

Aspire2STEAM.org. "At just 15 she already possesses a mind-boggling array of coding skills, many of which she taught herself; aspires to solve real

and serious health problems facing the world today; and is a positive role model and teacher of girls both younger and older than herself."



Sirihaasa Nallamothe, Aspire2STEAM Scholarship Recipient

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Aspire2STEAM Scholarship  
Recipient*

Sirihaasa is also quite motivated. At the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, she was astounded by how long a family friend and others had to wait to get tested for COVID-19 and then get their results. She felt compelled to help create a faster diagnosis process, which led to her expanding her algorithm knowledge and creating a convolutional neural network (CNN) that uses lung x-ray images to determine whether the patient has Pneumonia, COVID-19 or is healthy. The CNN she created has

applications for Leukemia and other diseases. Her hard work did not go unnoticed; she recently received a student research position with a professor at University of Illinois.

Sirihaasa used her scholarship award from Aspire2STEAM to help pay for expenses related to receiving her TensorFlow certification, including a summer-long membership with Coursera so she can take the recommended courses to pass her TensorFlow Developer Certificate Exam. "This certification will allow me to expand my knowledge and reach in the machine learning world," said Sirihaasa. "I also hope to use my knowledge to help develop machine learning

lessons that are understandable to middle schoolers.”

Middle school was an important time in Sirihaasa’s life. After being introduced to robotics in 5th grade, she was so intrigued that she began dreaming in code. In 7th grade, Sirihaasa joined a free class to learn web development, including HTML, CSS and JavaScript. Unfortunately, being the only girl in a class full of boys, she was subjected to gender-based discrimination and an unsupportive learning environment, which led her to fear curiosity. She worked through her fear and worked hard to build her programming skills.

Sirihaasa quickly absorbed and strengthened her coding abilities using multiple programming languages and her confidence soared. She started The Dream Code Project a national initiative in partnership with Girl Scouts, where she teaches girls in grades 5-11 languages including Python, HTML, CSS, JavaScript and Java to help inspire more female involvement in STEM. The aim of the Dream Code Project is to simplify

complicated programming languages into easy-to-understand lessons. Said Sirihaasa, “I uplift and encourage students to be proud of their mistakes. I encourage them to interrupt me and ask questions to understand the content being taught and to show them that no question is silly.”

Several awards Sirihaasa received for her work through The Dream Code Project and her machine learning solutions include: NCWIT 2021 National Honorable Mention; GripTape Challenger Grant and Award; SWENext STEM in Action Award, 2021 and 2020; NCWIT Illinois Winner 2021 and 2020; NCWIT 2020 National Honorable Mention; COVID-19 Competition Equal Engineers International Winner; Congressional App Challenge IL 18 Runner Up; Rockwell Automation National Semifinalist; Project CS Girls National Finalist, among others.

“We were so excited that Sirihaasa applied for our EXPLORER scholarship so we can get to know



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her better and share her accomplishments with our loyal supporters and donors who care about closing the gender gap in tech,” said O’Donoghue. “Most people are surprised to learn that talented young women and girls are left behind in many ways. Not only do more young women graduate with student debt than young men, but they are also less likely to receive scholarships...this is especially true for young women of color.”

ABOUT...

Aspire2STEAM.org (formerly known as Mission Sisters Who Work) is a charitable 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We [provide scholarships](#) and mentoring to young women and girls who are working hard—aspiring—to achieve careers that require education in science, tech, engineering, the arts or math...and they could really use a hand up over the incredible barriers of student debt and rising education costs, and the real, ever-present opportunity barriers that still keep them out of most male-dominated industries. These young women are doing their part, let’s help them by doing ours.

[Donate now](#) at [Aspire2STEAM.org/donate/](https://www.aspire2steam.org/donate/) and learn more about our 21 in '21 Annual Fundraising Campaign. Your kindness is a catalyst for change and empowerment for the young women and girls we serve.

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