

2023

# ANNUAL REPORT

**TECH KIDS**  
**UNLIMITED**  
TECHKIDSUNLIMITED.ORG



# Table of Contents

Mission	2
Letter	3
Reach	4
Overview of Tech Workshops	5
Topics By Program	6
Career Ladder Programs	7
Partnerships	8
Highlights	9
Support	10



# Mission

Tech Kids Unlimited (TKU) uses technology tools, computer science thinking, and social-emotional learning to ignite *unlimited* futures for neurodiverse students. Students who learn and think differently explore the creative power of tech, practice work readiness skills, and build confidence through online and in-person programs in a fun and supportive community.



Words used by TKU students to describe their experiences.



*"I learned more about how to make websites! I knew a bit about how to use HTML and CSS to make basic websites, but I finally have professional software that I love to use and is free that I will continue to use!" - Student, Age 13*

# Letter from Board President & Executive Director

Reflecting on the past year at Tech Kids Unlimited, we are filled with immense gratitude for everyone who has been involved with or contributed to TKU's journey. This year was particularly momentous as we celebrated our 10th anniversary in June, and marked the milestone with a gallery exhibition at NYU Tandon that showcased a decade of our students' remarkable digital work.

Beginning as a small class of 12 students in a local community center, TKU was founded on the belief that everyone deserves a meaningful life and, when given the right tools, has unlimited possibilities. A decade later, this foundational belief continues to be the heart and soul of our organization.

2023 was a year of inspiring growth and innovation that would not have been possible without the incredible staff, students, partners and supporters. We continued with hybrid programs and tailored experiences and curriculum for both in-person and virtual attendees. TKU's hybrid model has allowed us to reach a broader and more diverse set of students every year, and is an area we will continue to invest in and explore with new opportunities in 2024.

A focal point of 2023 for TKU was the growth and success of work-based learning programs. Providing students with supportive adaptive environments, and for advanced students- internships in our Career Ready Internship Summer Program- has resulted in real-world skills and experiences. The impact of programs like the Digital Agency and Creative Tech Internship, is a source of great encouragement, and has invigorated our enthusiasm for further expansion in the coming year with a slate of new programs around certifications for jobs.

To our funders-thank you! We recognize and truly appreciate your support!

To our parents-thank you! You have entrusted your children to us and we will always be there for them!

To our kids-thank you! We love hanging out with you and teaching you!

The accomplishments of this past year only strengthen our resolve to continue the mission of TKU and we are excited and optimistic about what 2024 and the next decade will hold for TKU and the TKU family.

Sincerely,  
Alex McKay,  
*Board President*  
&  
Beth Rosenberg,  
*Executive Director*



Attendees at the 10th Anniversary Gallery Exhibition celebration.

# Our Reach

**525+**  
Unique Students

**710** enrollments



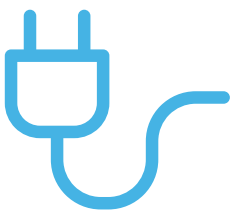
**80 families** benefited from Parent Talks

Students from **11** states: NY, NJ, MA, CA,  
CT, FL, MO, OH,  
NC, TN, NV



**43%** of students received financial aid

45.1% **returning** students and 54.9% **new** students



20 programs = **682** hours of teaching

*"TKU is a great place for your child, helping all students understand various tech topics with care and compassion. All of the social workers and teachers will help your child meet their fullest potential." - Parent*



# Tech Knowledge Workshops

## Sunday Tech Workshops

Virtual & in-person workshops focused on learning new tech skills or building on existing skills.

## Digital Empowerment Workshops

Free virtual after-school program where students explore topics of interest with peers and build on their communication skills in a supportive environment.

## Hackathon

Social justice topics turned into all-day events with guest lecturers to use technology for good. This year's topic was AI For All Minds, exploring how to use artificial intelligence ethically.

## Tech Socials

Evening gatherings where students hang out, play games, and share in a community of techies.

## Summer Weeklong Workshops

Program topics vary & range from digital art to new technology. 10 am to 4 pm ET, half days available, in-person or virtual.

*"My son loves TKU, the friends he makes help him out with the tasks he takes, the mentors help him out with finding the right college and the programs he takes really makes him happy."*  
- Parent



*"I learned more about how to make websites! I knew a bit about how to use HTML and CSS to make basic websites, but I finally have professional software that I love to use and is free that I will continue to use!"* - Student, Age 13

# Topics By Program

## Sunday Workshops

Game Design with Bitly (Virtual)  
3D Modeling (Virtual & In-Person)  
Animated GIFs (Virtual)  
Code a Winter Greeting Card (Virtual)  
Physical Computing (In-Person)  
Music Production (Virtual)  
Using Artificial Intelligence (Virtual & In-Person)  
Create Web Comics (Virtual)  
Typography & Graphic Design (Virtual)  
Data Visualization & Infographics (Virtual & In-Person)  
Code with Python (Virtual)  
Creating Music with Code (In-Person)  
Game Design (Virtual)  
Digital Animation (Virtual)  
Song Parodies (Virtual)  
Fall Family Day (In-Person)  
Micro:bit workshop (In-Person)

## School Break Programs

Interactive Storytelling with Twine (Virtual)  
Coding Live Visuals for Concerts (Virtual)

## Digital Empowerment Series

Social Media Algorithms (Virtual)  
Artificial Intelligence (Virtual)  
Copyright (Virtual)  
NFTs (Virtual)

## Cybersecurity Summer Program

Free program in collaboration with NYU K12  
STEM Education

## Parent Programs

OPWDD/Self-Direction How-to  
Supporting Autonomy while Holding Boundaries  
Anxiety and OCD Tips  
Planning for Your Disabled Child  
Self-Direction and 4 C's of 21st century  
Navigating Social Media as Neurodiverse Individuals  
Executive Functioning Tips

## Summer Weekly Workshops

Coding with JavaScript (Virtual & In-Person)  
Digital Art Studio (Virtual & In-Person)  
Game Design Lab (Virtual & In-Person)  
DIY Gadget Workshop (Virtual & In-Person)

## Socials

Socials were held in the winter, spring, summer, fall and for winter holidays.



*"If it wasn't for TKU I would probably not see myself doing anything like the projects that we have completed. I really appreciate TKU for opening my eyes and showing me new things about life." - Student, Age 19*

# Career Ladder Programs

## Digital Agency

Teens with advanced technology skills completed projects for actual clients and received stipends. Projects included: redesigning a website, creating a logo, making videos on digital literacy, and more! Go to: [www.TKUagency.com](http://www.TKUagency.com)

## Career Readiness Internship Summer Program (CRISP)

College-age students worked on technology projects for 5 weeks in an internship site matched to their skill level and interests. They worked on soft skills (e.g., responding to managers, building relationships with coworkers, arriving to work on time, etc.) led by a social worker who provided essential individualized support. Some of the intern projects include: creating social media content and promotional material, assisting in video editing and script writing, Coding web pages using jQuery and other languages.

## Creative Tech Internship (CTI)

Students, aged 17 to 24, participated in a hybrid program every Friday throughout the academic year. Interns spend the day learning creative software and earn school credit for it.

## College Access Program (CAP)

A program that provides a supportive environment for participants to explore college options and build college readiness skills.

*"My son thrived in your program and was enthusiastic about increasing his skills in each summer workshop. He felt respected by the staff & his self-esteem improved as a result." - Parent*

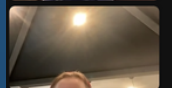
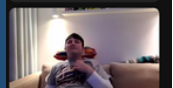


## How to Find Scholarships

- Ask your guidance counselor or advisor for help!
- Complete the FAFSA form <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/afsa>
- There are websites such as <https://www.scholarships.com/>
- Look up specific scholarships based on your major, your experiences, your identity, etc.
- Always check who is eligible for the scholarship—some have guidelines like you have to be a first-year student, you have to be within a certain age range.
- Play to your strengths—if you like art, look for art scholarships, if you're good at sports, look for sports scholarships.



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# Partnerships

TKU is grateful for the contributions of all our partners, both large and small, who collaborated with us this year. See details of some partnerships below.

aiEdu

AHRC

Bridges to Work

Common Impact

CUNY College of Staten Island

ExpandEd

Fitch Ratings

JobsFirstNYC

The Lang School

Leadership Fellowship of New York

NY STEM Education Network

New York City Employment Training Coalition

NYU Ability Project

PASE (Partnership for Afterschool Education)

Project REACH at CUNY

SparkYouthNYC

Student Success Network

Summer Youth Employment Program

The Summit School

Titus School

West Los Angeles College,

Winston Prep Transitions

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## Elementari

Worked with Elementari, an online storytelling/coding platform, to adapt their interface and lessons to be more accessible. This partnership was sponsored by Infosys Foundation USA.

## PaTTAN Drone Curriculum Adaptation

Adapting a drone curriculum to help neurodiverse teens and young adults prepare for the FAA drone pilot license exam. The project was commissioned by the Dept. of Special Education in Pennsylvania, PaTTAN.

## Brooklyn Autism Center

An 8-session Game Design workshop took place in the fall and a Coding workshop took place in the winter in partnership with the Brooklyn Autism Center. 11 students worked on different game projects using various platforms and coding methods. These projects involved learning about sprite creation, game logic, and block based coding.

## NYU K12 STEM Education

Students, ages 14-22, attended a free 3-week computer science for cybersecurity program in partnership with TKU and the NYU K12 STEM Education. The goal of the program was to introduce cybersecurity and computer science to neurodiverse highschool students. Some topics covered were digital forensics, privacy, and cyber threats.

## District 6 Fair

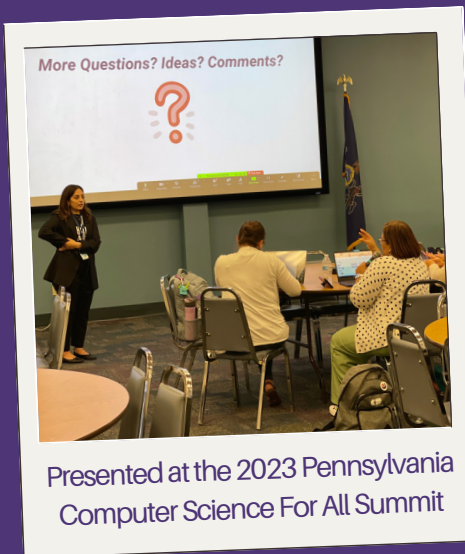
Hosted an AI Community Fair for Washington Heights's District 6. Participants explored the newest accessible AI tools to create digital projects in a fair-like setting.

## ASD Workforce Coalition

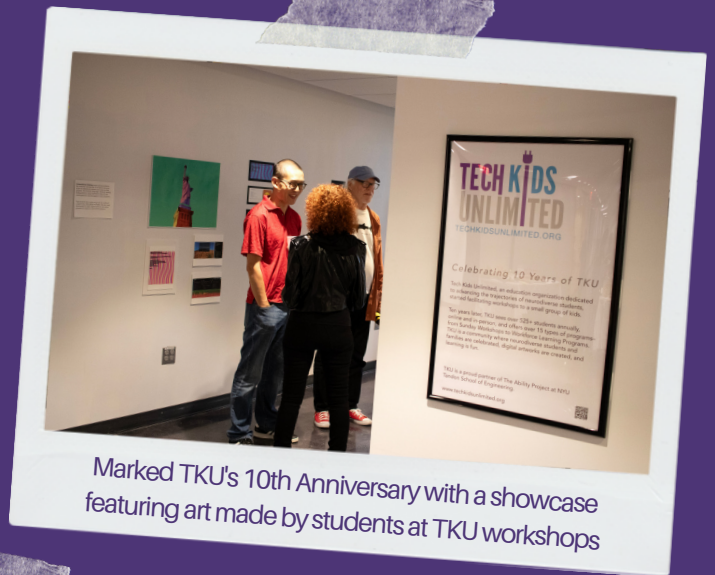
TKU launched a coalition with 15 partners who are all working towards the goal of gainful employment for students with autism.



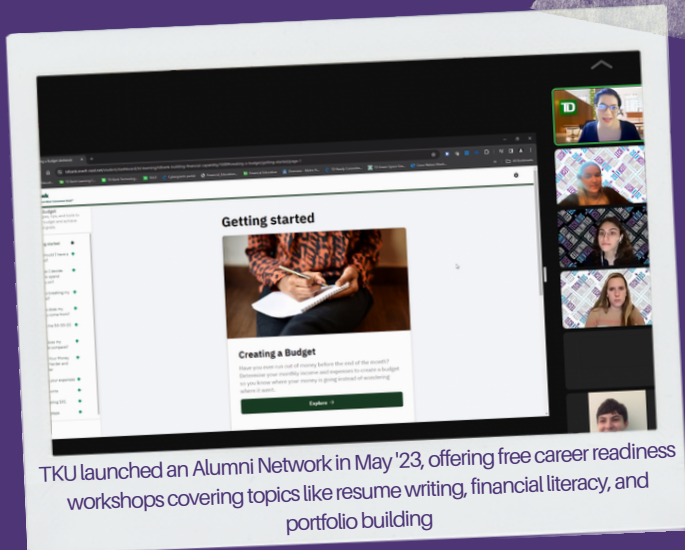
# Highlights



Presented at the 2023 Pennsylvania Computer Science For All Summit



Marked TKU's 10th Anniversary with a showcase featuring art made by students at TKU workshops



TKU launched an Alumni Network in May '23, offering free career readiness workshops covering topics like resume writing, financial literacy, and portfolio building



TKU students spoke at a panel at the PACE University Disability Film Fest



NonProfit New York published an article about TKU



A TKU student was given a Young Leader award at the Spark Youth Benefit

# TKU is so grateful to our supporters!

## Foundations & Organizations

The Beacon Group  
J.E. & Z.B. Butler Foundation  
Elephant Rock  
The FAR Fund  
Joseph H. Flom Foundation  
Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism  
Harman Family Foundation  
The Ichigo Foundation  
Kupferberg Family Foundation  
Meringoff Family Foundation  
The New York Community Trust  
NYC Employment Training Coalition  
NYU Community Fund  
U P Sircar Family Foundation  
Stavros Niarchos Foundation  
John H. & Ethel G. Noble Charitable Trust  
Omer Foundation  
Society for Science  
SparkYouth NYC  
The Taft Foundation

## Corporate

Akamai Foundation  
ConEdison  
Google.org  
Infosys Foundation USA  
National Grid Foundation  
PwC Charitable Foundation  
TD Charitable Foundation

## Government

District 34 NYC Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez  
National Science Foundation  
NYC Cultural Affairs  
NYS Council on the Arts



## Staff

Beth Rosenberg, Executive Director  
Ellen Goldstein, Development Strategist  
Haley Shibble, Education Director  
Laura Olivieri Robles, Operations Director  
Halnur Komsul, Work-Based Learning Specialist  
Raymond Barash, Learning & Curriculum Specialist  
Savannah Jerome-Solbakken, Education & Research Coordinator  
Brittany Banks, LCSW, Social Worker Intern Supervisor  
Ariana Riccio, Ph. D., Evaluator  
And the 20+ wonderful part-time teaching staff members

## Board

Alex McKay, President  
Ryan Linden, Vice President  
Joel Bencosme, Treasurer  
Stephanie Borgman  
Luke Dubois, Ph. D.  
Erik Dykema, J.D.  
Roseanne Legrand, CCC/SLP  
Harrison Lung  
Beth Rosenberg