



# Rising Stars Learning

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Technology evolves constantly, and so should community service! Rising Stars Learning is a community-based learning program promoting equal education and supporting the learning needs of underserved families, leveraging technology to maintain its sustainability.

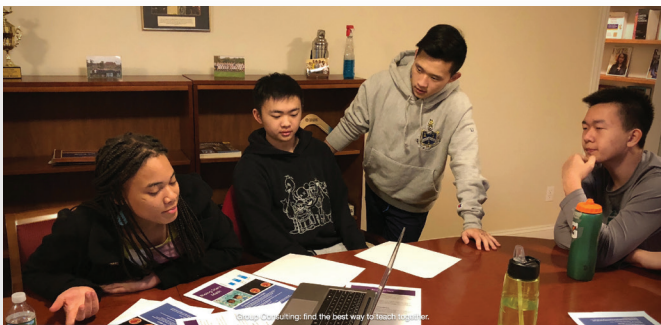
## Motivation and Inception of the Idea

You may wonder what motivated us to initiate this project. The program dates back to 2017, when we worked on our first charity concert raising funds to support Achieve — a tuition-free, academic-enrichment program for underprivileged kids from Boston public schools. During the fundraising process for Achieve, we learned that many applicants could not gain admission into this program due to limited space.



We thought we could leverage technology, such as Khan Academy, to meet the learning needs of many more kids and families. This is what motivated us to begin Rising Stars Learning for underprivileged students and families. In our pilot project, we started with sending out flyers and hosting open houses.

One Haitian family from our neighborhood came to our first Open House. We knew how to teach their 7th-grade daughter, who was within our expected age range. However, we had no clue what to teach the family's 4-year-old girl and her parents when they walked in. Can you imagine a situation in which the teacher-to-student ratio was 3:1? In fact, our student got more confused when she heard three different answers to her question!



Feeling that the little girl was starved of attention, I left Alex and Brandon to teach the 7th grader and moved over to the younger girl and her parents. I asked her, “*what would you like to learn?*”

“I like to color things,” said the little girl.

“Can you teach her counting?” suggested the father, and I replied that we could do both. I fetched some colored pencils and Origami books and started to teach her counting.

Anything that can inspire learning counts! Later, the little girl started to color on a beautiful Origami sheet, and I moved on to teach the father how to play chess. The mother switched her attention between the two learning groups and seemed content just observing different kinds of curiosities floating and transferring.



In this immigrant family, the parents don't speak English very well, can't afford internet service at home, and have a 7th-grade daughter who needs help on math. We donated our old iPads and drove to their home in Dorchester during weekends to teach the family math, English, and personal finance, using Khan Academy on iPads. We created a fun and sustainable learning environment for this Haitian family using technologies that enabled them to learn important skills together in their home. The daughter and parents continue their learning on iPads even when we are not there with them.



To expand this program, we trained students from other high schools to help underprivileged families in their own communities.

Later, Nobles teachers Ms. Hurley and Mr. Snyder connected us with Immigrant Family Service Institute (IFSI-USA.org) in Boston. We had a chance to introduce Rising Stars Learning to students at IFSI-USA and they loved our program. Our team volunteered at IFSI-USA this summer to build a stronger relationship and deeper trust with students. In order to launch the Rising Stars Learning program at IFSI-USA at a larger scale, we need more tablets and laptops so that students can continue their learning on Khan Academy at home. We are running an online fundraising to prepare enough devices for more underserved families at IFSI-USA.



**An exciting journey is ahead of us! We hope you will join our team and help more students and families either at IFSI-USA or in your own community. We would love to show you our project and work together with you to create better educational opportunities for underprivileged families in the greater Boston area.**

