

A Southside Chicago Collaboration Launches Project INTEL, Providing Emerging Technology STEM Education and Career Training to Underserved Youth



[Chicago, IL]: NextWaveSTEM, a leading emerging technology education company, in collaboration with the Gary Comer Youth Center, is proud to announce Project INTEL (Integrated Neighborhood Technology Engagement Laboratory). Supported by Verizon through the Forward Community Enhancement Award, Project INTEL is an innovative program aimed at bridging social equity through cutting-edge STEM education and technology engagement for underserved youth.

The educational landscape in Southside communities is marked by significant disparities and a glaring digital and technological divide. Despite the thousands of student enrichment programs in Chicago, there remains a critical gap in providing hands-on equipment and technology-based learning opportunities. Project INTEL seeks to fill this void by offering middle and high school students, as well as young adults, with a ladder approach to STEM education and cultivating 21st century skills essential for higher education and careers in technology.

More than just learning, Project INTEL is about transforming lives. Students will actively participate in STEM courses, delving into building, coding, and exploring emerging technologies. In addition, students will connect with industry professionals and receive comprehensive support to build the grit, resilience, and social-emotional skills crucial for success in the workforce. High school students and young adults will have access to certification and credentialing, preparing them for a rapidly evolving digital world.

“We are thrilled to partner with the Gary Comer Youth Center on this transformative program for Chicago’s youth,” said Udit Agarwal, CEO of NextWaveSTEM. “By providing access to quality STEM education and career exposure, Project INTEL will help build a pipeline of diverse talent prepared to excel in the digital economy. This aligns with our mission of creating more equitable access to tech skills and opportunities.”

The Gary Comer Youth Center draws students from Greater Grand Crossing, Woodlawn, Englewood, Chatham, and South Shore neighborhoods in southside Chicago. “Our young people have amazing potential, but often lack access to the kind of high-quality STEM programming that Project INTEL offers,” said Remington Price, Center Director. “This partnership will open opportunities for them to gain skills, connect with mentors, and pursue careers they may not have imagined possible.”

“This Community Enhancement Award demonstrates Verizon’s commitment to digital inclusion,” said Steven Shaw, Community Engagement Director at Verizon. “Enabling experiences with leading-edge technology and linking that exposure to workforce participation provides participants with the tools needed to thrive in a digital economy.”

Project INTEL is set to run through August 2024, with the overarching goal of showcasing how hands-on technology engagement and workforce development can effectively address systemic inequities. This impactful program is made possible by the generous support of the \$100,000 Verizon Forward Community Enhancement Award.

About NextWaveSTEM: NextWaveSTEM’s commitment is to focus on educational equity and ensuring all students—especially the most marginalized—have access to innovative educational experiences and STEM opportunities in order to prepare them for success after high school and throughout their careers. Learn more at www.nextwavestem.com.

About Gary Comer Youth Center: The Gary Comer Youth Center serves students from the South Side of Chicago, empowering them with diverse programs and career exploration opportunities. Learn more at www.comeryouthcenter.org.

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