

TTAG NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2026



TTAG ANNOUNCEMENTS

UC Davis Campus Visit

Who: Everyone

When: Sunday, January 25, 2026 - all day

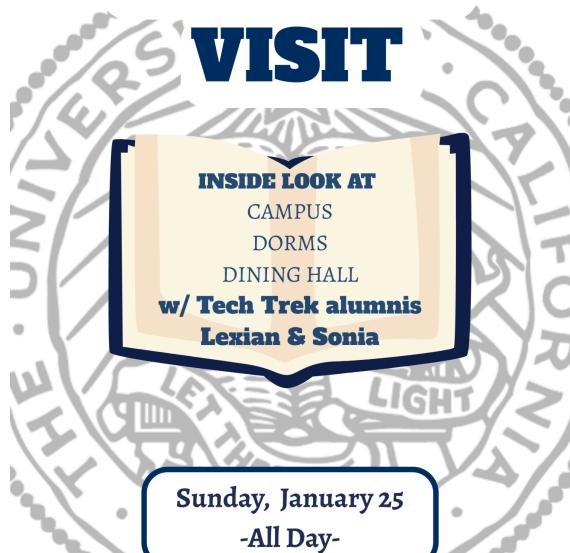
What: Visit the UC Davis campus with TTAG on Sunday, January 25, 2026 and explore what the school has to offer. You will learn about the physical environment, the general atmosphere and culture, and the potential academic and social fit for you!

RSVP/more info here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1PjIYgqQQ_kXoEntelfLCRLcUvCVPGX3dytgA490twWY/edit?ts=6902dd37

Spots are filling up, and we are still seeking another parent to offer carpooling.

UC DAVIS VISIT



Sunday, January 25

-All Day-

RSVP HERE:

<https://forms.gle/g5MrUXX7gVx5zkCq5>

Tech Trek AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Who: 8th and 9th graders (but anyone is welcome!)

What: Help the Tech Trek Committee with recruiting, school outreach, and inspiring more girls to join Tech Trek. You will be a resource to teachers, parents, and student applicants! This is a great opportunity to build leadership experience, connect with other alumni, and become more involved in the TTAG community!

RSVP/more info here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1hzrJx4wLgJQ6yeu4ISCrgHUEaZE-Ci0ZyYUHzjkOHU/edit>

College Fit Workshop

Who: TTAGers 10th grade+

When: Sunday, February 22 at 12:30 PM - 2 PM

What: TTAG will be hosting a College Fit Workshop for 10th graders and up on Sunday, February 22 at 12:30 PM - 2 PM. With the help of College Consultant Brianna Peters, you will better understand what colleges are looking for as well as what you should be considering when choosing your school.

Where: Pre-register on zoom

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/KNx192lISSmyv_VVpBHhQA





COLLEGE FIT WORKSHOP

February 22, 2026

12:30 PM - 2 PM

With Brianna Peters,

Climbing to Success College and Career Consultant

&

Q&A with Tech Trek Alums in different STEM majors

Zoom Registration



Learn what colleges are looking for and what you should consider when choosing your school!

2026-2027 TTAG Scholarship

About the TTAG Scholarship

Established in the Spring of 2021, and in furtherance of the TTAG goal of enabling Tech Trek Alumnae to pursue their interest in STEM, the TTAG Scholarship offers Tech Trek Alumnae who are members of the AAUW-SF TTAG up to \$16,000 over 4 years to support their college related expenses as they attend college.

Eligibility & General Rules

- Applicants must be a graduating High School Senior (at a public, private, or charter high school) and must be an active member of AAUW-SF TTAG. TTAG members currently enrolled in college and meeting other eligibility criteria may apply.
- Scholarship amount is \$4,000/year and will be disbursed directly to the Applicant upon proof of college enrollment as a full-time student at an accredited 2-year or 4-year college or institution (local, statewide or nationwide).
- Scholarship shall be exclusively used for education and college-related expenses (tuition, laptop, books, school supplies, software, etc.). The TTAG Scholarship Committee reserves the right to request proof of expenses.
- Scholarship is renewable for up to 3 years upon demonstration of successful academic progress (GPA, grades, class completion, etc.), official transcript and **dependent on availability of scholarship funds.**

How to Apply as a high school senior

1. Please fill in the [Application Form](#)
2. Upload the following pdf documents in section 7 of the Application Form:
 - A 250- to 750-word essay: you can use your Common App essay or create your own. If you use your own, make sure to provide an essay that would inform the TTAG Scholarship Committee of who you are, where you want to go, and why.
 - A document with the answer (250 word max.) to 2 of the following Questions:
 - Question 1: How have you contributed to TTAG as a member?
 - Question 2: What did you do during your last school break?
 - Question 3: How have you contributed to improving, supporting, or spreading the word on issues related to equity, diversity and inclusion ?
 - You are welcome to include a copy of your Common App, UC or CSU Application, or Application to your preferred college (optional)
 - Your resume or equivalent (list of activities, LinkedIn, website, etc.) if you choose not to attach your Common App
3. Alternatively, the pdf documents can be separately emailed to aauwsfbranch@gmail.com using “TTAG Scholarship Application” in the subject line.
4. All documents should be received by February 16, 2026 - 11:59 PM PST to be considered

How to Apply or Renew as a college student

1. Please fill in the [Application Form](#)
2. Upload the following pdf documents in section 7 of the Application Form:

- A 250- to 750-word essay that would inform the TTAG Scholarship Committee of who you are at this point of your college experience, where you want to go, and why.
- A document with the answer (250 word max.) to 2 of the following Questions:
 - Question 1: How have you contributed this past year as a Tech Trek Alumna on campus?
 - Question 2: What did you do this past summer to advance at a personal, academic, and/or professional level?
 - Question 3: How have you contributed to improving, supporting, or spreading the word on issues related to equity, diversity and inclusion ?
- Your resume or equivalent (list of activities, LinkedIn, website, etc.)
- Copy of your current transcript (or equivalent document) as proof of academic progress and achievement

3. Alternatively, email the pdf documents to aauwsfbranch@gmail.com using "TTAG Scholarship Application" in the subject line
4. All documents should be received by February 16, 2026 - 11:59 PM PST to be considered

Timeline

Application Due Date: February 16, 2026 - 11:59 PM PST

Application Review: February 17 - April 15, 2026

Selection Notification: April 15, 2026

Release of Funds: by June 30th, 2026

Questions

Please email your questions to: aauwsfbranch@gmail.com using TTAG Scholarship in the subject line

STEM ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

First Saturday: Free Tour of the Santa Cruz Arboretum

Who: Everyone

What: On the first Saturday of each month, the Arboretum offers a staff-led tour of the Arboretum. You will see plants from around the world, like New Zealand, South Africa, California, and Australia.

Where: Arboretum Road, Santa Cruz

When: January 3, 2026, 11 AM - 12:00 PM

Apply/more info here:

<https://events.ucsc.edu/event/first-saturday-tour-at-the-arboretum/2026-01-03/>

Family Astronomy: Discovering the Whole New Worlds of Exoplanets

Who: Everyone

What: Learn how scientists detect planets orbiting other stars and imagine what life might be like on exoplanets, distant, mysterious worlds beyond our solar system.

Through interactive activities, kids and adults alike will imagine what it might be like to stand on one of these strange new worlds.

Where: Chabot Space and Science Center, Oakland

When: January 3, 2026, 6 PM - 8 PM

Apply/more info here:

<https://chabotspace.org/calendar/family-astronomy-mysteries-of-the-sun/>

Dragonflies - Livestream

Who: Everyone

What: Learn about the colorful and interesting Dragonflies and their unique biology with enthusiast Kathy Biggs and field biologist Sandra von Arb. Speakers will teach you about the 47 species that occur here, how to identify them, and present what the Dragonflies need for survival, where to find them, and their migratory habits.

Where: Online

When: January 8, 2026, 7 PM - 9 PM

Apply/more info here:

<https://marinaudubon.org/event/dragonflies/>

The Physics Show - Three Performances

Who: Everyone

What: The Physics Show is a fun science show for kids and their families. The show is a series of fun, exciting demonstrations of the laws of nature.

Where: Foothill College, Los Altos Hills

When: January 10, 2026, 10 AM - 5 PM

Apply/more info here: <https://www.thephysicsshow.com/>

City Public Star Party

Who: Everyone

What: Come join the San Francisco Amateur Astronomers for free public stargazing of the Moon, planets, globular clusters and more!

Where: East Meadow, Tunnel Tops Park,

When: January 10, 2026, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Apply/more info here: <https://sfaa-astronomy.org/events>

How this place is made: Geology, Decisions, Photography, and the Oyster

Who: Everyone

What: Join us on Saturday for a panel discussion exploring how the Bay Area's natural and cultural landscapes have been shaped by geology, ecology, and human decision-making. This conversation brings together artists and environmental thinkers. Panelists include exhibiting artists Torreya Cummings and Sarah Lowe, writer and geologist Andrew Alden, and Stephanie Romano, Environmental Education and Operations Manager at The Watershed Project.

Where: Berkeley Art Center, Berkeley

When: January 24, 2026, 2 PM - 3:30 PM

Apply/more info here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/panel-discussion-how-this-place-is-made-tickets-1978495649748>

Science Saturday: Marvelous Migrations

Who: Everyone

What: Join us for Science Saturday celebrating the amazing journeys of migrating animals! You will see microscopic plankton, magnificent birds, and massive whales. We are also celebrating the birthday of Sandy the grey whale, so come by to sign a birthday card and receive a birthday treat. This family-friendly event includes free admission to the Museum.

Where: Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, Pacific Grove

When: January 31, 2026, 10 AM - 3 PM

Apply/more info here:

<https://www.pgmuseum.org/upcoming-events/science-saturday-marvelous-migrations>

TTAG NEWS

Claude the Alligator's Tragic Death

Claude the Alligator at the California Academy of Sciences died on December 2, 2025, at the age of 30 due to cancer. Claude's dedicated care team had been monitoring him closely the weeks prior to his death and he received the best possible care from animal care teams. He was an iconic resident at the museum, captivating the hearts of many fans.

Let's hear what members of the TTAG Student Board have to say about Claude's passing!

Ila: "I remember visiting the Academy of Sciences frequently when I was younger, and being so excited to see Claude with each visit. Hearing about his death is definitely heartbreakin, though he's made an impact on our community and will be missed."

Elizabeth: The beloved albino alligator and the face of SF's Academy of Sciences, Claude, has just passed away at age 30. In his 17 years at the museum he gained the love and admiration of many. His solitude and stillness couldn't help but draw in all who saw him. I remember personally watching this unique animal as a kid, captivated by his presence. There are 60,000 live animals in the museum but there will always be only one Claude. I hope he knows how much he means to the city and to the world. If you too have special memories of Claude feel free to share them at these links...

- claude@calacademy.org
- calacademy.org/claudeforever

Read here to learn about a San Francisco based AI model associated with the alligator:

<https://royalexaminer.com/ai-meets-alligator-claude-the-chatbot-finds-its-spirit-animal/>

Claude Forever

A CELEBRATION OF LIFE



Sunday, January 18
11 AM - 1 PM



Who: Everyone

When: Sunday, January 18 from 11 AM to 1 PM

Where: Golden Gate Park Bandshell (75 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive)

What: **Claude Forever: A Celebration of Life in Golden Gate Park on January 18 -**

This free community event will feature stories, speeches, performances, and family-friendly activities celebrating Claude's impact across generations. Following the outdoor program, the California Academy of Sciences (55 Music Concourse Drive) will host special indoor programming from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., including craft activities and an artisan marketplace with commemorative Claude souvenirs available for purchase from local vendors. Museum admission is required. For more information, click the link below.

More Info:

https://www.calacademy.org/events/special-events/clause-forever-a-celebration-of-life?fbclid=IwY2xjawO_qyZleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETE3UU1JNnlxWTFyeERoVk5hc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHmYcUVVXHfqB_1opORBVeFnwAOX2T6LNlvHhYRkGTvrr-JZEiaWrmzuUaAaF_aem_AmMZUC_UFx5qUvcf6oLN9w

140TH ANNIVERSARY OF AAUW-SF

We stand on other women' shoulders

As we usher in the new year, I would like to invite you all to reflect on the following quote by Adrienne Rich, an American poet, essayist, and feminist (1929 - 2012). The quote was highlighted in the keynote speaker presentation at the 140th anniversary celebration of the AAUW-San Francisco branch I attended on December 6th, 2025.

"Today's women
Born yesterday
Dealing with tomorrow
Not yet where we're going
But not still where we were."

These words powerfully depict the journey of women equality in our society. Remember, we stand on other women's shoulders. For example, the changes brought by the #MeToo movement were only possible because women have advocated for women rights for over a century, whether voting rights, legal rights, reproductive rights or equal pay*.

Interestingly Rich's words can also expand to depict one's personal journey, whatever our stage in life is. And, I am sure, that applies to so many of you, TTAGers, as you prepare yourself for college.

As we usher in the new year, prepare our intentions, set our goals, whether personal, academic or professional, these words can lead us to be positive, powerful, productive, and have a PHENOMENAL NEW YEAR!

While AAUW-SF has 140 years of history, TTAG, its most recent program, has only 5-6 years of existence. I may tell you more about the branch history in upcoming Newsletters...stay tuned!

Rosaura P.C. Valle, PhD
AAUW-SF Secretary and TTAG Chair
rpcvalle@aauw@gmail.com

*According to AAUW, the gender pay gap remains real as in 2025 women make, on average, 81% of what men earn.



An Interview With Tech Trek Alumna Danielle Knutson

By Gina Gilson

Danielle Knutson attended Tech Trek in 2018, and now she's a junior at MIT programming a talking AI head.

"Hi, how are you?" was typed into the chat box. Sure enough the floating head spoke the phrase with a noticeably friendly inflection, its translucent surface reflecting an ombré background. Implementing concepts from course 6.4, AI and Decision Making, Danielle and her partner designed an interactive AI head. "I find it so cool," said Danielle. "I just want to show everyone."

Danielle shared her broader approach to programming, preferring to do the hard work early on—one reason why she prefers C++ to Python, the first language she learned. “It makes my life easier in the long run,” she explained. “I do the work before to get better work later.” Danielle described how developing Python code involves debugging along the way, so the tediousness of writing in C++ pays off in a reliable final product.

Danielle suggests programming languages shouldn’t be learned merely by syntax and semantics, but contextualized by their purpose. She compares programming languages to human languages in how “it’s good to understand where it came from and what the roots are and what the cultural context is behind it.” She noted that many programming languages were created out of necessity; “If you look at the history of a lot of [programming languages] you’ll find some random guy who’s like, ‘Oh, I needed to be able to do this so I created a whole programming language to make it easier for me.’”

Danielle illustrates how uniquely innovative the ever-expanding field of Computer Science is, but also conveyed her long-term goal of using technology to help people, which expands her interests to Urban Planning. She’s particularly drawn to the combination of data science and decision making. “Those decisions impact a bunch of people every single day and making sure they’re made by people who are informed is super important.”

Danielle credits part of her motivation and confidence to TTAG, where she had the chance to meet role model Mae Jemison, the first Black woman astronaut. Jemison encouraged her to believe in herself and break boundaries, a sentiment that continues to shape Danielle’s learning philosophy today.

What has piqued your interest recently? A film, a book, a fun fact, a field trip? Fill out the [TTAG Currents Feature Form](#) to share your STEM current in the next newsletter!

Contact Gina (gina.lucia2017@gmail.com) with any questions.

ONGOING / USEFUL LINKS

Opportunities for Youth 14-24

Explore a list of jobs, internships, scholarships, and other opportunities for youth in San Francisco!

Link: <https://www.sf.gov/opportunities-for-san-francisco-youth-ages-14-24>

Watch the STEM Career Talks replay by Berkeley Lab

Learn about the wide range of STEM professions through Berkeley Lab staff and Bay Area professionals

Link: <https://k12education.lbl.gov/programs/virtual/career-talks>

NASA Psyche Mission Innovation Toolkit

A free online course series based on the real-world science, engineering, technology, and teamwork behind the Psyche mission.

Link: <https://psyche.asu.edu/get-involved/innovation-toolkit/>

GuideX.Co

A (student-created) resource for high schoolers across the nation to find 500+ extra-curricular opportunities.

GuideX offers modules for students, employers/organizations, and educators:

- 1) High Schoolers and parents can search for opportunities
- 2) Employers/organizations can submit opportunities for high schoolers
- 3) Educators can use the tool to guide their students

Link: <https://guidex.co/>

Exploring Engineering at UC Berkeley

Are you interested in exploring different fields in engineering? Exploring Engineering at UC Berkeley, a 10 podcast series, takes listeners behind the scenes of different engineering majors. Hear from real students, faculty, and professionals as they share stories, challenges, and exciting career paths.

Link:

<https://engineering.berkeley.edu/students/resources/exploring-engineering-podcast/>

STEM READS

This Month's Topic: Physics

Title: Astrophysics for People in a Hurry

Writer: Neil deGrasse Tyson

Description: What is the nature of space and time? How do we fit within the universe? How does the universe fit within us? This book will reveal just what you need to be fluent and ready for the next cosmic headlines: from the Big Bang to black holes, from quarks to quantum mechanics, and from the search for planets to the search for life in the universe.

Link:

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/astrophysics-for-people-in-a-hurry-neil-degrasse-tyson/1125419184?ean=9780393609394>

IF YOU MISSED TTAG EVENTS...

If you missed the COLLEGE 2 CAREER PREP workshop last month and would like to access the assets, please contact: rpcvalle.aauw@gmail.com

CONTACT US

It's our goal to bring you workshops, camps, extra-curricular activities, internships, and other exciting opportunities in STEM. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to share with your TTAG community any cool STEM Ed event taking place at your high school. Want to share info and opportunities or give us feedback?

Please contact us at:



- kristywen10@gmail.com (Kristy Wen)