Evolving New York City's Life Sciences Ecosystem

Genspace®

Learn. Create. Grow

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Acknowledgements

Without our community of volunteers, members, project leads, instructors, youth interns, partner non-profit organizations, board members, donors and funders, none of our work would be possible. We are profoundly grateful for each and every one of you.

To our individual donors, whether you contributed $5 or $5,000, thank you for keeping our community thriving.

The following foundations gave generously to support our mission in 2019:

SIEGEL FAMILY ENDOWMENT

The Pinkerton Foundation

The Achelis & Bodman Foundation

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Letter from the Directors

Last year was a time of growth, reflection, and evolution for Genspace. We are grateful for your continued support as we carve a new path for the future of this invigorating and innovative community. We are proud of the work we did in 2019 to strengthen our programs, including expanding our youth programs, increasing our class offerings, growing our community of creatives, researchers, and entrepreneurs, and launching a new community project focused on designing and prototyping new biomaterials.

We celebrated our 10-year anniversary by reflecting on the history and previous leadership of Genspace. We are incredibly grateful to those founders for establishing the original vision for this organization. We then embarked on our first-ever strategic planning process, collecting surveys and listening at town halls where we heard our community's needs and vision for the future. As a community and as an organization, we closely examined our purpose, core programs, people served, and the impact of our collective action.

As academic, industrial and community biology have grown over the past 10 years, barriers to equal access and participation persist. Recognizing these challenges, and coinciding with the addition of new staff, we saw an opportunity to holistically incorporate equity and inclusion. We revised our mission and vision statements, we wrote new core values that better capture who we are today, and we envisioned how we want to influence New York City biotech in the future.

We see Genspace as a home for people from diverse backgrounds to shape the experiences, conversations, and potential of emerging global technologies. We believe that the Genspace community can proactively lead this field by promoting a socially-conscious life sciences ecosystem.

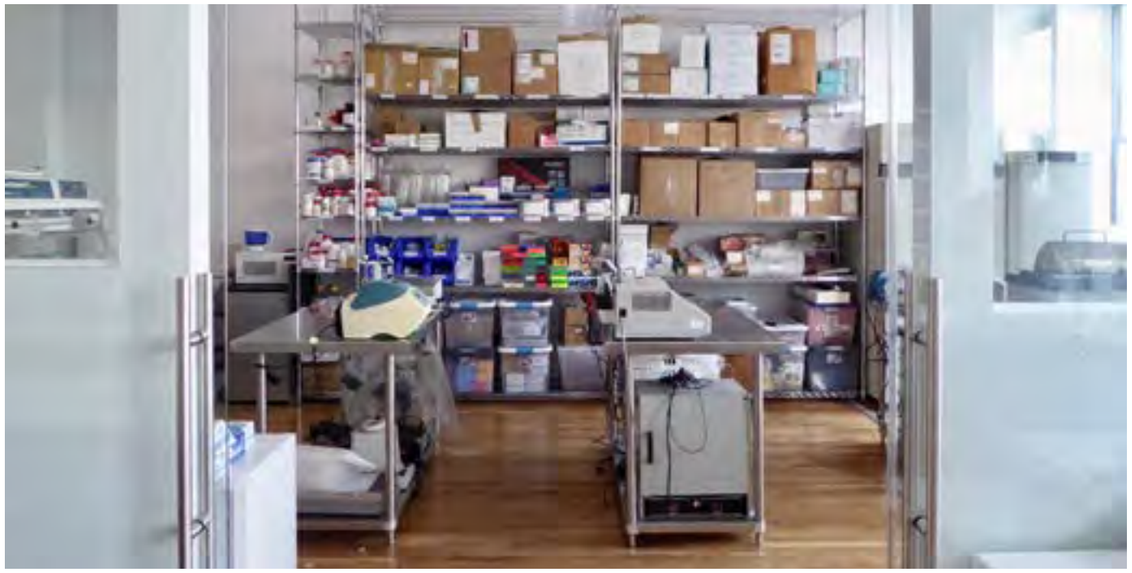
Thank you for taking this journey with us and helping us move this vision into action. We are so grateful to be part of such a thoughtful, engaged community and we look forward to an exciting year.

Angela Armendariz, Ph.D.
Director of Operations

Beth Tuck, M.S.
Director of Science Education

About Genspace

Genspace is a community biology laboratory in South Brooklyn, New York where anyone can learn the fundamental scientific concepts and lab skills they need to meaningfully engage with the life sciences — including biology, biotechnology, microbiology, genetics, and related subjects.



Our Story

We got our start in 2009, when a small collective of biology hobbyists, entrepreneurs, artists, and scientists gathered in a North Brooklyn living room. The group reflected on their shared interest in the emerging field of biotechnology, and dreamt up visions of what a more accessible, democratized biotechnology could look and feel like.

A year after that initial meeting, our community lab opened its doors to the public in downtown Brooklyn. We invited citizen scientists, artists, engineers, designers, hackers, and quite frankly, anyone else who was interested, to deeply immerse themselves in the life sciences. Using hands-on exploration and experimentation as their guide, our early participants started million-dollar companies, created groundbreaking artwork, and competed in international contests.

Our opening had ripple effects around the nation, and a handful of similar, community-oriented biology laboratories started in California, Colorado, Maryland and Washington shortly afterward. Over the last decade, more than a hundred community groups and labs have cropped up across the United States and around the world. While this global community thrives, we are thinking about what we can and should do to shape the future of this movement.

In 2019, under new leadership, we refocused our organizational mission, vision, and core values to center diversity, inclusivity, equity, and access in our work. We believe that all persons — whether they are a 16-year-old Brookylnite or an underemployed adult looking to switch careers — should be able to participate in the emerging bioeconomy. We believe that knowledge is power, and it is our responsibility to make scientific information and skills accessible for all who want it.

Biohacker Boot Camp participants analyze their own DNA for ancestry markers with instructor Julie Wolf, Ph.D.

Biorocket Research Program Intern Sunyyah Fenelon-Foristall demonstrates how to extract DNA from a strawberry to parents, friends, teachers, and members of our broader community at our end-of-program celebration.

Our Vision

The world that we work to realize.

Everyone is empowered to use the life sciences to explore questions and develop applications that are connected to their lives and rooted in their communities.

Our Mission

The work that we do.

Our mission is to foster a safe and inclusive community where all people – including those from non-traditional and under-represented backgrounds – can experientially learn, boldly create, and meaningfully grow with the life sciences.

Our Core Values

Guiding principles for our staff, board, members, instructors, interns, and volunteers.

We embody these values as we work together to fulfill our mission, engage our community, and recruit new employees.

Who We Are

Diversity and Inclusivity

Each person's unique identity and life experiences enrich the Genspace community. We work to break down barriers, build access, and listen to and learn from each other in order to exchange ideas and create a space that welcomes everyone.

Transparency

We are open and honest. We communicate our goals, activities, and projects. We are accountable to each other. We strive to create systems that make information accessible to each other on staff, within the Genspace community, and with the general public.

Ethics

We strive to be responsible stewards of technology by considering the implications of our work and the impact that we will have on others and our environment. We evaluate who carries the risks and who benefits from our work. We practice integrity and work towards a more just society.

What We Cultivate

Curiosity

We believe that learning is a lifelong process. We are eager to ask questions, to wonder at the world around us, and to follow our interests. We build pathways to spark inquiry and engagement.

Experimentation

We try new things and embrace unexpected outcomes. We think outside the box and make connections between traditionally siloed disciplines. We explore new concepts, iterate on our processes, and are resilient and brave.

Collaboration

We believe that the best ideas are sparked by many minds coming together. We work to build a community of support and exchange. We acknowledge each other's contributions, respect each other's expertise, ask for help when we need it, and offer our time and skills when we can.

2019 at a Glance

Classes and Workshops

22 New classes designed
23 New instructors
55 Classes and workshops offered
400 Hours of hands-on learning
535 Learners engaged

Partnerships

3 Corporate workshops hosted
5 Universities served
7 Community-based organizations served
9 K-12 schools served
31 Total programs offered
270 Hours of hands-on learning
598 Learners engaged

Youth Programs

2 Biorocket Research Internship Program alumni interns
12 Biorocket Research Internship Program interns
13 Teen Leadership Council members
70 Hours of after-school hands-on learning
140 Hours of mentored research experience for teens

Membership

3 Premium members
4 Community Project teams
25 Individual members
33 Community Project members

Public Outreach

6 Free public outreach events
34 Free or low-cost public events hosted at Genspace
683 People served on-site
5,500 People served off-site

Volunteers

4 High school and college interns
17 Events supported
90 New volunteers engaged
198 Volunteer hours logged

2019 Program Highlights

Students from our partnership with Uncommon Collegiate Charter School investigate biodiversity in our local environment with molecular techniques.

Learn.

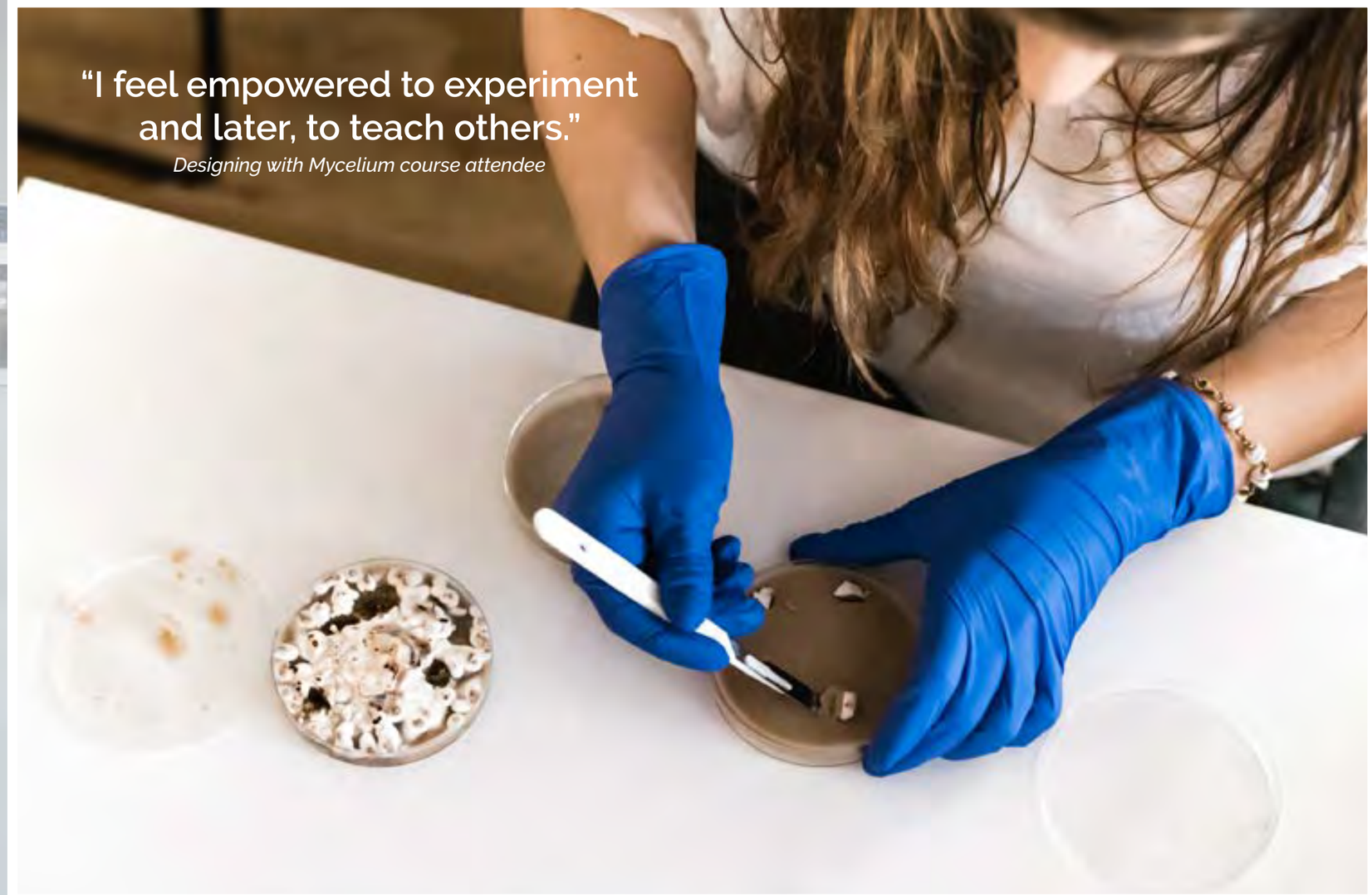
Nurturing Interdisciplinary Explorations of Science

We believe that anyone can learn the fundamental scientific concepts and technical skills needed to engage with the life sciences, and strongly encourage those with little or no formal scientific training to attend our courses, workshops, and other educational programs.

To date, we have hosted more than 450 classes and events, attended by more than 7,000 people ... and counting!

"The mix of expertise in classmates made for a productive and non-intimidating environment."

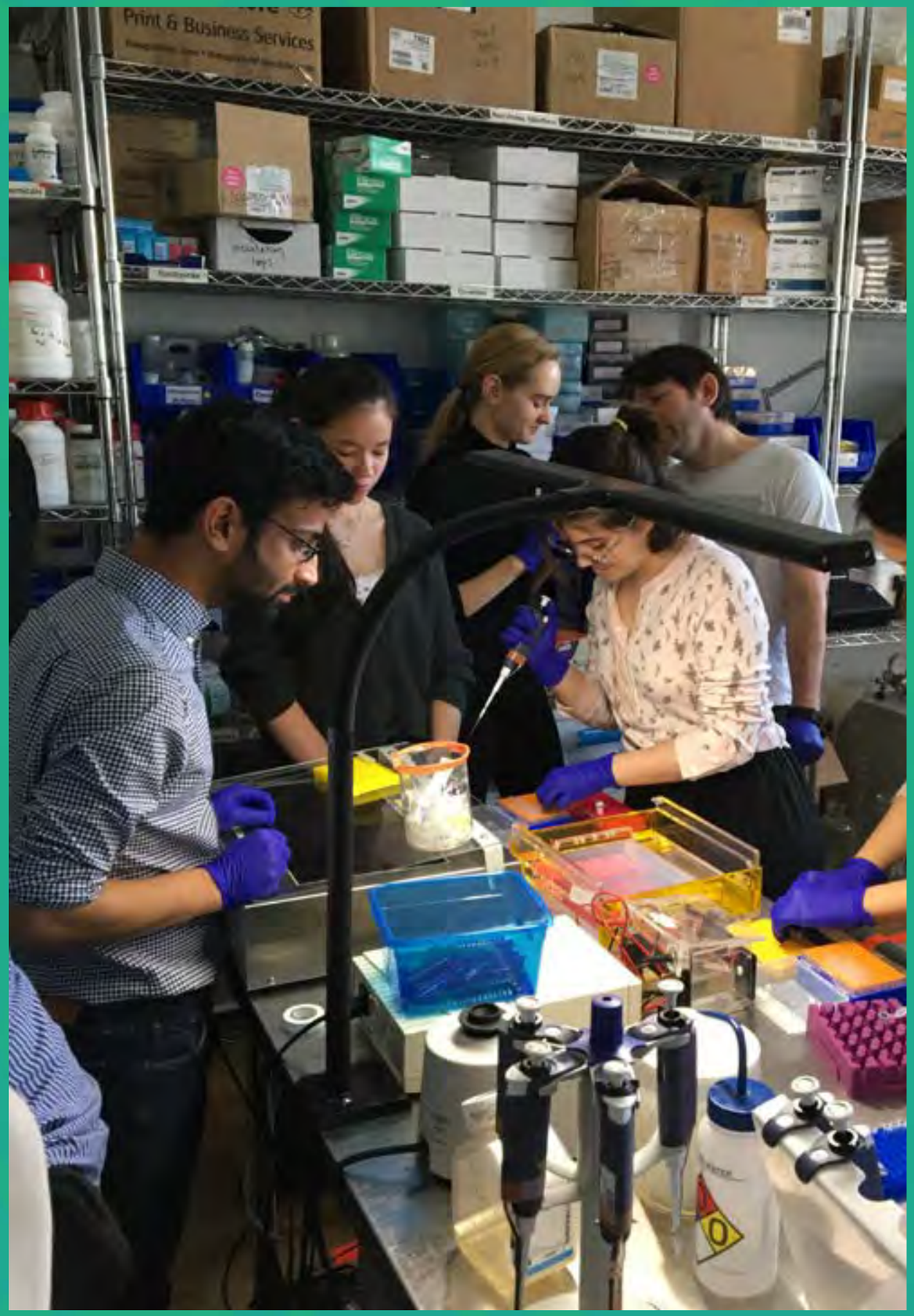
Synthetic Biology 101 course attendee



In both our founding and current vision, we've prioritized and valued interdisciplinarity across science, art, and culture. This ethos is also reflected in our constantly-expanding programming, which spans areas like personal genetics, biodesign, and bioinformatics, to name a few.

We value hands-on, experiential learning and design our course curriculum using evidence-based instructional methods and best practices. Our course instructors are artists, designers, engineers, and scientists, and they are eager to share their expertise with our community.

We are constantly working with instructors to fine-tune our courses and recently implemented a new course evaluation system to ensure that our programming reflects the interests of our community.



NYU Langone graduate student Sud Pinglay teaches learners about the fundamentals of synthetic biology using hands-on experiments and demonstrations.

Meet Our Learners

"Prior to this class, I felt like I was hitting a wall with my interest in biodesign due to a lack of direct experience with the subject. This course made biology and its practice feel very accessible and interesting."

Biohacker Bootcamp course attendee

Biohacker Boot Camp class participants jump straight into lab work learning proper pipetting. technique from scientists.

"I am more comfortable in the lab and feel like I want to learn more. Before taking this class, synthetic biology felt almost inaccessible."

Synthetic Biology 101 course attendee

Participants in our Coloring Textiles with Bugs: Old [Cochineal] and New [Bacteria] course learn how to create a natural, sustainable red dye from insects, drawing from indigenous knowledge and historical texts.

2019 Course Highlights

Coloring Textiles with Bugs: Old [Cochineal] and New [Bacteria]

Instructors: Naomi Rosenkranz, Columbia University and Sumeyye Yar, Ph.D., Freelance Consultant and Science Educator

In this hands-on workshop, students learn both the history and the science of coloring textiles with organisms using historical techniques as well as new methods informed by contemporary scientific advances. They explore the long tradition of dyeing cloth brilliant shades of red with cochineal insects and then discover new cutting-edge techniques of printing textiles with colorful microbes.

Learners in our Protein Engineering for Medicine, Art, and Our Planet course explore the beauty and versatility of protein crystal structures using specialized software.

Genome Editing with CRISPR-Cas9

Instructors: Neta Agmon, Ph.D., Neochromosome and Paolo Mita, Ph.D., NYU Langone Health

CRISPR-Cas9, or just CRISPR as it's often called, is one of the most transformative recent developments in biotechnology. CRISPR has made gene editing a lot easier and much more accessible, even to those with little or no formal biology training. In this four-part, intensive lab course, learners edit the genome of brewer's yeast to make it fluoresce, completing the process from start to finish.

Neurohacking 101

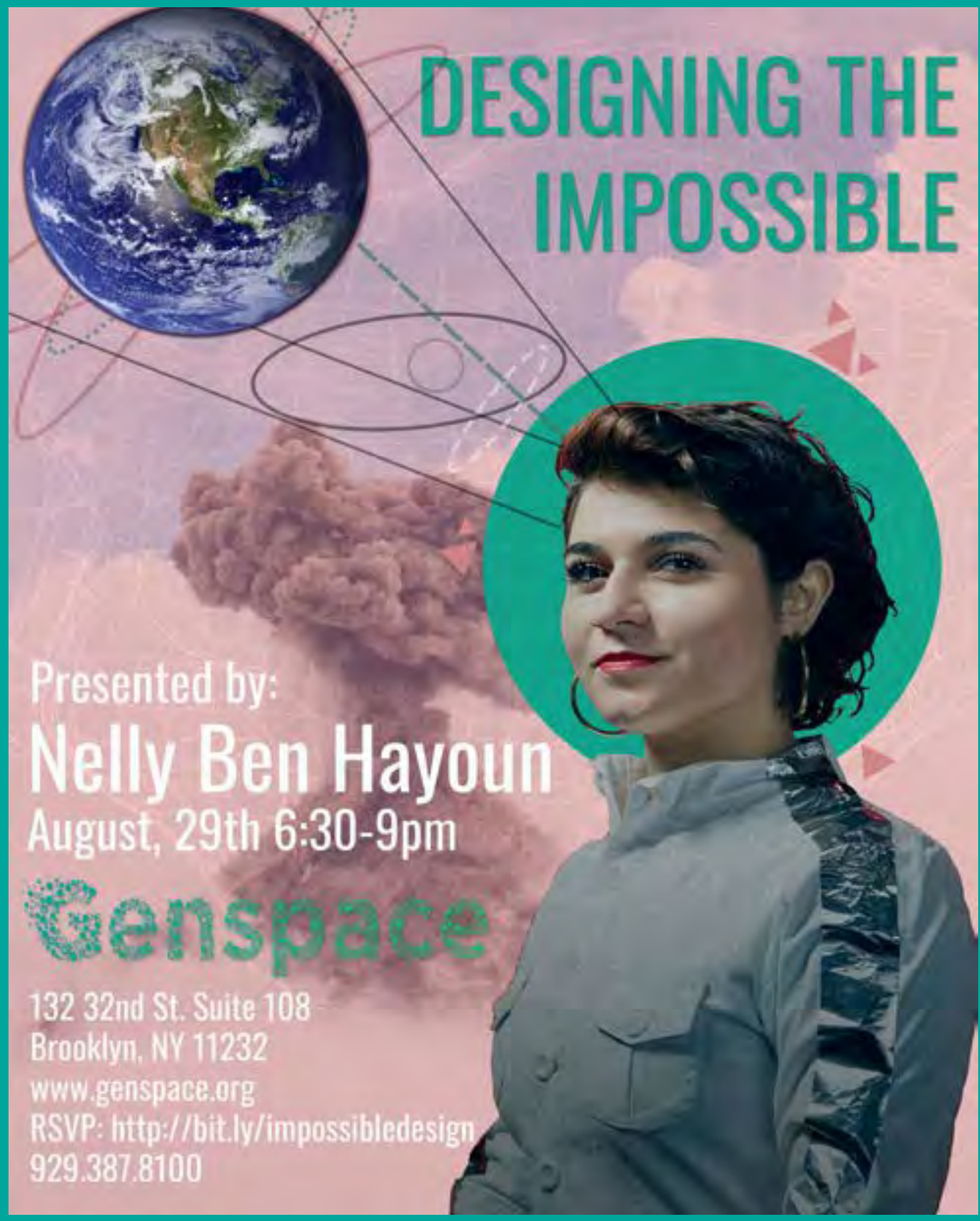
Instructor: Aki Nikolaidis, Ph.D., Center for the Developing Brain at the Child Mind Institute

MRI brain scans are more than just cool-looking, sometimes-colorful visuals — they're chock full of data, too! In this day-long course, learners get an introduction to MRI data analysis, learning the basics of neuroscience and how to 'read' MRI data using the Python programming language. They pull brain data from servers, and learn how to analyze and visualize the brain networks in these open source data on their own laptop.


EPI
GEN
ETICS


Mining Human Genome
Data with R


MICROBIAL MINUTES


DESIGNING THE
IMPOSSIBLE
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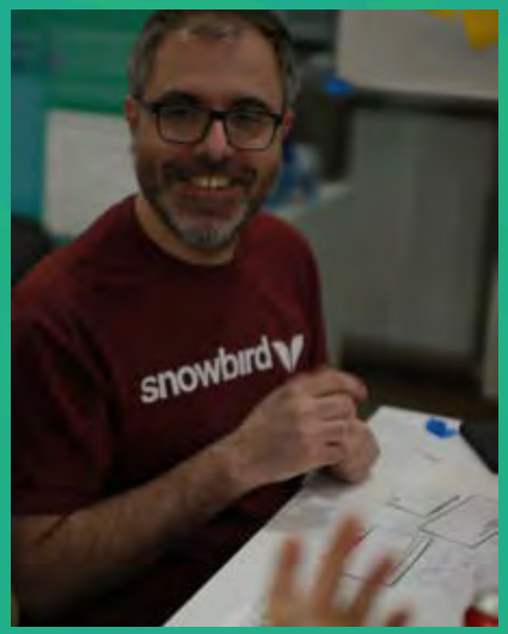
BIOCULTURES AS INTERACTIVE STORYTELLING
SLIME TECH LAB


Engineering Proteins
for Medicine, Art, and
Our Planet:
The GIFt of Life

Meet Our Instructors



CRISPR-Cas9 instructor Paolo Mita, Ph.D. collaborates with artists, designers, and students to imagine a future restaurant that serves lab-grown meat.

"Teaching at Genspace has pushed me to fine-tune my science communication skills and challenged me to develop an engaging and practical curriculum. Genspace reminds me of the fun of discovery and exploration that brought me to become a scientist in the first place."

Paolo Mita, Ph.D., Genome Editing with CRISPR-Cas9 Course Instructor

Course instructor Mandana Manzari, Ph.D. teaches students how to analyze proteins in the lab.

"Genspace has provided me with the support and platform to share my scientific knowledge with a broad audience, and to learn from other like-minded scientists, engineers, physicians, artists, and design experts."

Mandana Manzari Ph.D., Protein Engineering For Medicine, Art, and Our Planet Course Instructor

Partnering with Schools, Colleges, and Nonprofit Organizations

Our partnerships with K-12 schools, universities, and community-based organizations improve our ability to respond to the needs of our community. For example, we worked with the Center for Family Life at Sunset Park High School (SPHS) to host two programs in 2019 focused on college- and career-readiness and service learning. This collaboration helped us strengthen our relationships with the local community and SPHS teachers, and gave us an avenue to recruit students for our Biorocket Research Internship Program.

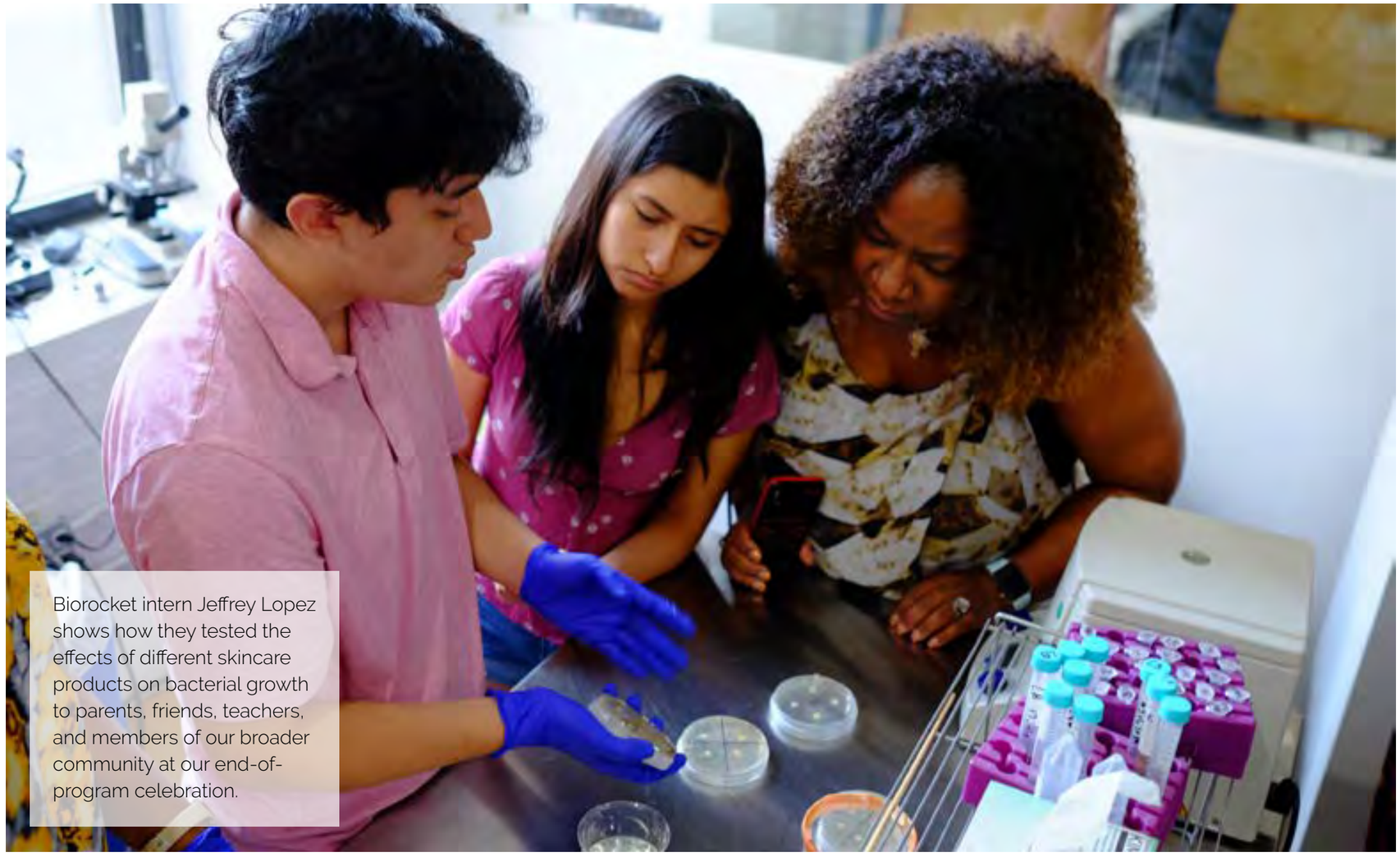
Other partners we collaborated with last year include Girls, Inc., Sunset Spark, Cooper Hewitt, Uncommon Collegiate Charter School, TEDxCUNY, NYU's Interactive Telecommunications Program, and the Fashion Institute of Technology.

"As community partners, Sunset Spark and Genspace hold a shared belief that programs like ours can serve as a powerful conduit to grow equitable representation in STEM related fields."

Yadira Hadlett, Sunset Spark

Genspace is a space where interdisciplinarity thrives. At our Future of Food: Thanksgiving event, we brought people of all backgrounds and experiences together to discuss how science and technology will impact food production and dining experiences.

Creating a Space for Youth to Learn and Lead

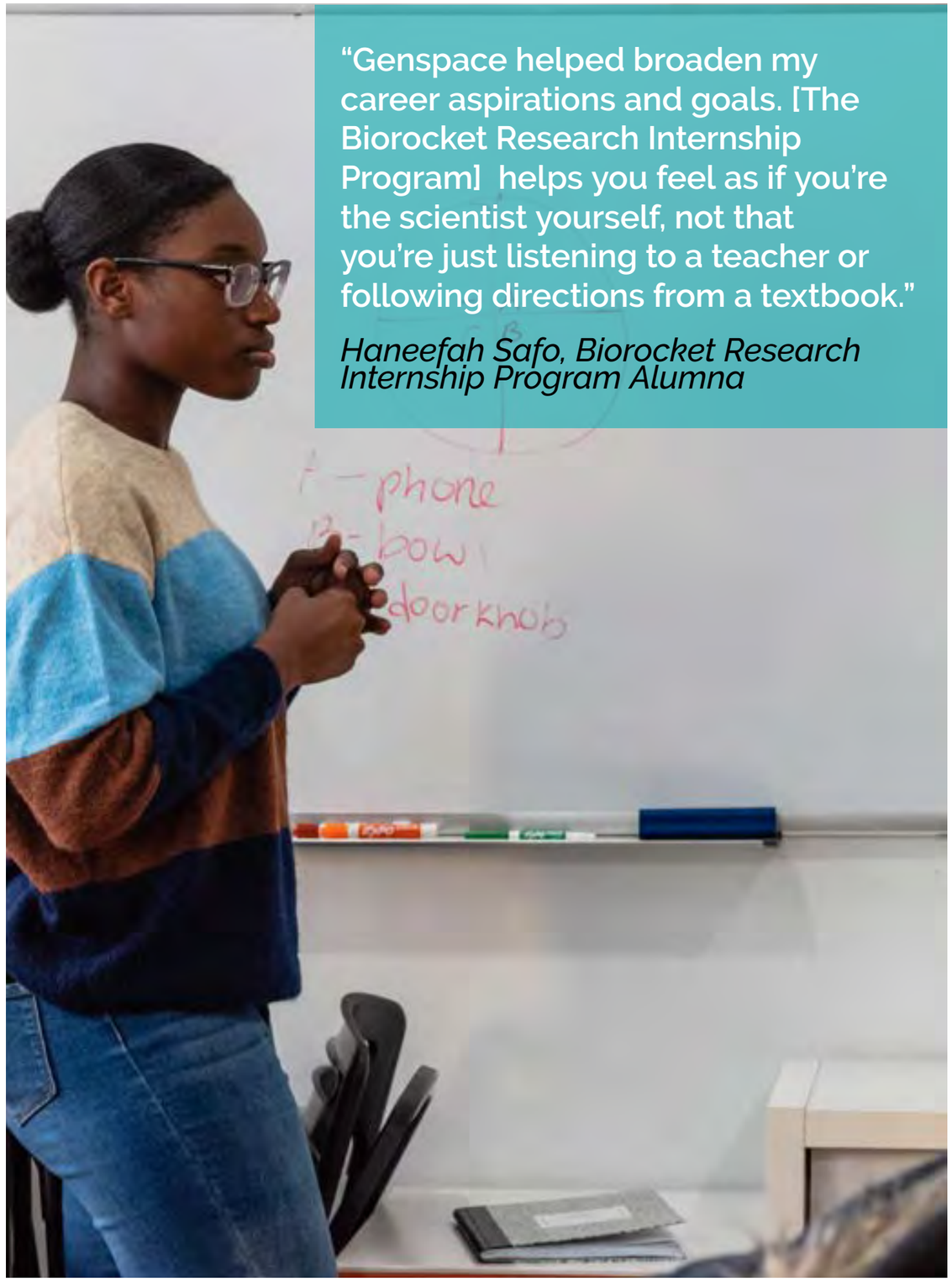


Biorocket intern Jeffrey Lopez shows how they tested the effects of different skincare products on bacterial growth to parents, friends, teachers, and members of our broader community at our end-of-program celebration.

The Biorocket Research Internship Program is our flagship youth development initiative. Designed for high school students in New York City from under-resourced schools and demographic groups currently underrepresented in the life sciences, interns experience a youth-focused educational program in genetics, microbiology, and synthetic biology, followed by a summer laboratory research experience in which they collaboratively design and undertake a research project of their choosing.

Following our third year of sucessful Biorocket programming, we now have 36 alumni, many of whom have continued working with Genspace beyond the culmination of their programs. This past year we piloted an alumni internship program, matching two teens with advanced biotech internships, and we plan to scale up this initiative in 2020.

In 2019, we also launched Genspace's Teen Leadership Council (TLC). The goal of the TLC is to ensure youth voices are seriously valued and acknowledged in Genspace's goals, mission, and programming. The council also supports teens in building leadership skills and deepens our relationships with the students' families,



> "Genspace helped broaden my career aspirations and goals. [The Biorocket Research Internship Program] helps you feel as if you're the scientist yourself, not that you're just listening to a teacher or following directions from a textbook."
>
> *Haneefah Safo, Biorocket Research Internship Program Alumna*

Biorocket intern Haneefah Safo summarizes her research team's experimental design.

create.

Student participants with partner youth development organizations, like the Magic Cool Bus, make artwork with genetically modified bacteria.

Genspace lab member Aradihta Parasrampuria produces alternative bacteria-based dyeing methods, which use less water and are more sustainable.

“Genspace is an enabler for those who think outside of the box.”

Lori Solondz, Multidisciplinary Artist and Genspace Member

Anyone, regardless of educational background, can become a member of Genspace and undertake their own projects in our fully-functional molecular biology lab. All projects must meet federal Biosafety Level 1 guidelines. These guidelines help us to ensure that our shared laboratory space remains safe for all.

We offer three membership tiers — Individual, Premium, and Community Memberships — to accommodate the wide range of interests, needs, and goals of our community. Regardless of membership tier, all lab members receive 24/7 access to Genspace’s facility, shared equipment and materials, along with mentorship and basic lab training from our staff.

Since 2012, 142 people have been members at Genspace, including researchers, artists, designers, engineers, hobbyists, and high school students and teachers.

Supporting Community Scientists, Creatives, and Local Entrepreneurs

Our Individual and Premium Memberships facilitate innovation and entrepreneurship in the life sciences by providing low-cost access to facilities and a knowledgeable, diverse community of users. As a result, we often serve as an incubator and pre-incubator space for local bio-entrepreneurs, giving them the tools and space they need to flourish. For example, Opentrons, a biotechnology company making open-source pipetting robots, was the first startup to come out of Genspace. Now, Opentrons has raised over $10M in venture funding and employs 50 people at their new headquarters located in DUMBO.

In addition to serving entrepreneurs, our membership program also provides high school students, community scientists, and artists with the space, training, and tools they need to pursue independent research and art projects. In 2019, the projects our members pursued ranged from mushroom barcoding, evolving plastic-eating bacteria, and investigating the antibiotic properties of plants, to slime mold #MeToo art activism, DNA jewelry, dyeing textiles with bacterial and thermochromic dyes, and generating sustainable bioconcrete.

2019 Genspace Membership Program

10 Scientists
8 Artists/Designers
4 Hobbyists
3 High School Students
3 Small Business “Premium” Members

Genspace member, contemporary artist, and biochemistry researcher Yoko Shimizu teaches students in our Biorocket Research Internship Program the art and science of creating leaf prints, which Shimizu calls "plant photosythegraphs."

Facilitating an Environment for Collaborative Experimentation

Genspace lab members share their projects at our biannual Open Lab, where members can network with one another and share their work with the public.

"Genspace is a rare gem. It provided us a chance to explore and create without the large overhead of setting up a laboratory. We could run experiments and learn from our mistakes in developing our protocols."

Andrew Rosner, Principal, HR Botanicals and Genspace Member

Our Community Memberships are aimed at those who want to explore advanced lab techniques in a more supportive and collaborative environment. Community Project members are artists, retirees, scientists, software engineers and students who work collectively with other members on one or more of our group research projects.

Community Project Teams

Expressive Matter: Biomaterials
Explores sustainable, biomass-sourced materials for product design and other creative applications.

Gadgeteering
Provides hardware and technical support to Genspace members and community project teams.

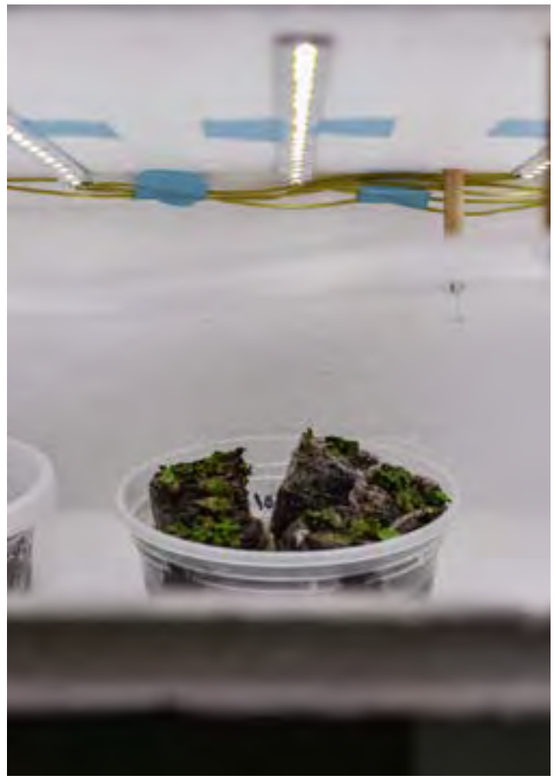
Open Plant
Participates in an international research consortium focused on using liverwort (*M. polymorpha*) to develop open source tools and methods for plant synthetic biology.

Optogenetics
Uses genetic tools to program microbes to be responsive to light, with potential applications for studying the brain's neural circuits.

> "Genspace is one of the few places where we, the people, can all come together to use science for the things we care about and the world we share."
>
> *Isabel Correa, Genspace Program Participant*

Building A D.I.Y. Open-Source Plant Incubator

Our community is collaborative and eager to share resources and expertise with one another. For example, members of the Gadgeteering community project developed and built a low-cost liverwort plant incubator to support the Open Plant project. They are currently extending the incubator's functionality to store and analyze remote sensing and plant image data.



Common liverwort grows in our Open Plant Community Project team's D.I.Y. plant incubator.

Justin Shaifer (Mr. Fascinate) brings the Magic Cool Bus to Genspace to share the joy of biology with students from backgrounds currently underrepresented in STEM.

Bringing Our Science to the Public

We firmly believe that meaningful, rigorous learning and innovation can occur beyond the confines of a formal degree or certificate program, and outside academic and industry settings. Through our programming, we strive to provide learners with hands-on, experiential learning connected to their lives and interests.

Beyond our community in Brooklyn, we support the thriving global community biology movement by guiding best practices in biosafety, sharing our insights in starting and maintaining a lab, and participating in the Global Community Bio Summit—an annual meeting of community biology practitioners hosted by MIT Media Lab.

To date, our founder's TED talk, along with our participation in public outreach and engagement activities, has allowed us to spark curiosity and share the joy of biology with millions of new learners all over the world.

"Genspace has been such a great partner to work with on our family festivals."

Ian Cotten, Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy

Families explore bacteria and fungus collected from kites in the air using microscopes at the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy's Waterfront Kite Festival.

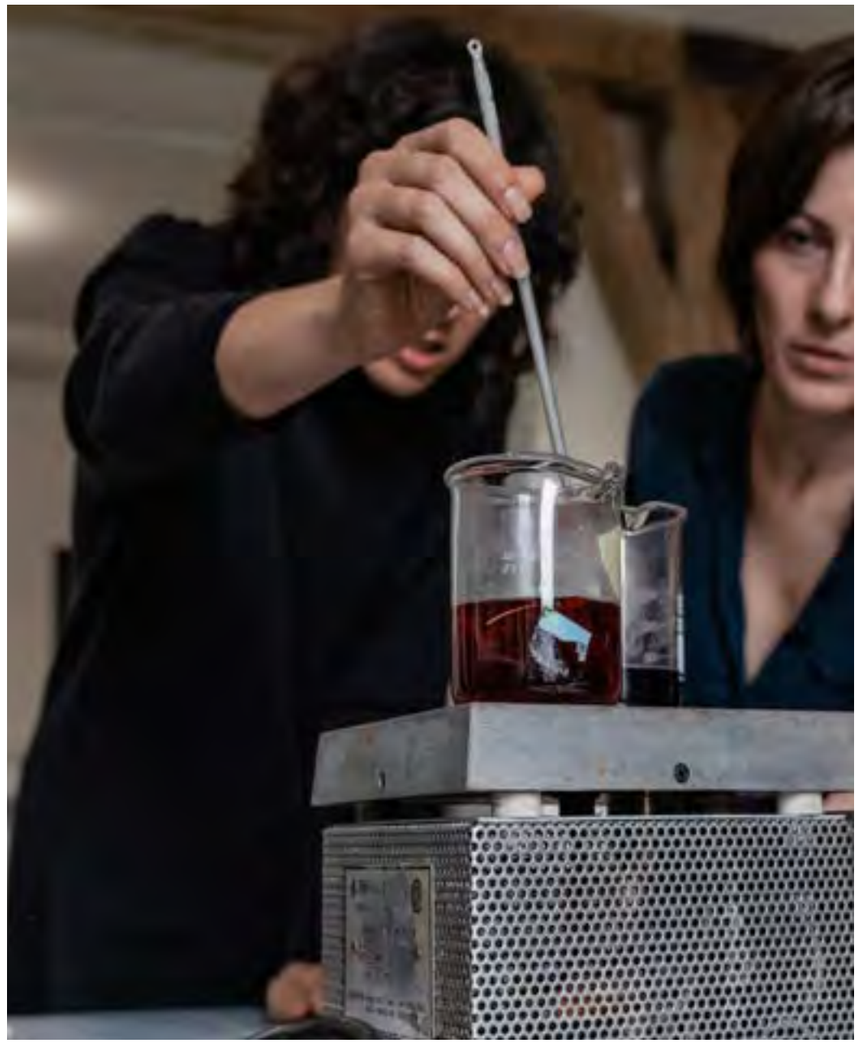
In addition to our classes, workshops, and memberships, we experimented with new public engagement efforts in 2019 to reach a broader audience in more equitable, accessible, and novel contexts.

Our offsite activities included programs such as Pioneer Works's "Second Sundays" public outreach event where we shared "Genetic Love Tests," a large-scale demonstration of a D.I.Y. genetic analysis for the oxytocin "love hormone" receptor attended by 350 people.

Award-winning *New York Times* science writer Carl Zimmer discusses his new book on genetics and heredity with geneticist and Genspace instructor Janina Jeff, Ph.D.

At another offsite outreach event, we presented "Flying for Microbes," a participatory science demonstration at the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy's Kite Festival. During the demonstration, participants attach petri dishes to kites and collect microorganisms from the air. Our team then incubates the samples and then shares photos of the critters with participants a few days afterwards.

We also brought well-known *New York Times* science writer Carl Zimmer to Genspace for a discussion about his new book on genetics, launched a new monthly discussion series on microbiology, hosted several community and family events, and partnered with cellular agriculture research institute New Harvest to put on a futuristic Thanksgiving food and design experience.



Engaging Volunteers in Our Programs

“Genspace matters as one of the rare spaces of cross-disciplinary collaboration where I, as an artist, can learn about topics in science. While there are a handful of spaces established with the intent of bringing STEM fields into art, only Genspace comes to mind as a place where people trained in art can come and learn about biology.”

Sarah Phillips, Genspace Volunteer

Volunteers are a vital part of our Genspace community, both in and out of the lab. In 2019, we launched a newly-organized volunteer program, recruiting helpers from diverse backgrounds including science, art, design, education, and more. Volunteer opportunities include mentoring members in a wide range of skills, working with our youth and family programs, assisting with lab and community events at Genspace and in the community, serving as teaching assistants for workshops, and helping to clean and organize the lab.

Volunteers demonstrate advanced yet simple technology to visualize DNA at the City of Science: Brooklyn.

Our Financials

Our Financials

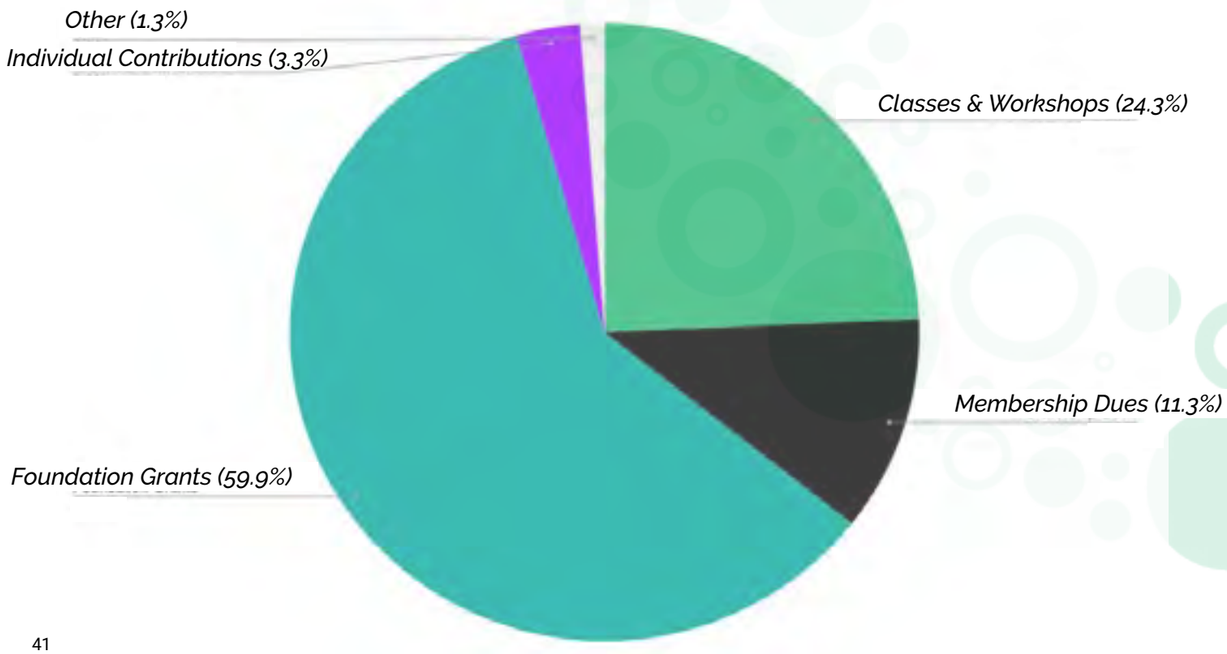
Genspace began a process of transformation in late 2018. We transitioned leadership, brought on new staff, and grew our volunteer base. We took stock of our strengths and had hard conversations about areas for growth. We focused a lot of time on listening and reflecting alongside our community, which we believe to be our strongest asset. Our financials reveal this year of reflection. Now, with a clear, forward-thinking vision we're ready to enact our new vision and bring partners with us on a path to sustainability for 2020 and beyond.

2019 Expenses

Program Services	71%
Management & General	20%
Fundraising	9%

2019 Revenue

Income	**2019**
Earned Revenue	$178,437.59
Foundation Grants	$299,985.00
Individual Contributions	$16,356.50
Other	$6,275.41
Total Revenue	**$501,054.50**



Statement of Financial Position

	2018	**2019**
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash	$292,537	$142,321
Due from Paypal	$3,581	$290
Total Current Assets	$296,118	$142,611
Property and Equipment, Net	$18,839	$19,853
Security Deposit	$12,000	$12,000
Total Assets	**$326,957**	**$174,464**
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current Liabilities		
Accrued Expenses	$6,000	$7,179
Total Current Liabilities	$6,000	$7,179
Net Assets		
Without Donor Restrictions	$112,238	$84,285
With Donor Restrictions	$208,719	$83,000
Total Net Assets	**$320,957**	**$167,285**
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	**$326,957**	**$174,464**

Meet the Team

Board of Directors

Jonathan Badal, Chair
CEO, Opentrons

Janina Jeff, Ph.D.
Senior Bioinformatics Scientist, Illumina

Dorothy Jones-Davis, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Nation of Makers

Laura Maher, M.A., Secretary
Relationship Manager, Siegel Family Endowment

Emeritus Board Members

Nurit Bar-Shai, Co-Founder, Genspace
Artist

Dan Grushkin, Co-Founder, Genspace
Executive Director, Biodesign Challenge

Kathy High
Professor, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Tom Knight
Founder, Ginkgo Bioworks

Mark Merrill
Strategy & Operations, Poncho Solutions

Staff

Elizabeth Tuck, M.S.
Director of Science Education

Angela Armendariz, Ph.D.
Director of Operations

Leticia Cartier Oxley, M.A.
Program Associate

Danya AbdelHameid
Development and Communications Manager

David Chuchuca
Biorocket Research Internship Program Educator

Meet the Team

Instructors

Neta Agmon, Ph.D., *Neochromosome*
Gillian Bayne, Ph.D., *Lehman College, CUNY*
Devon Collins, Ph.D., *Bard Early College High School*
Laura Cox, *Opentrons*
Alison Cutlan, *Biophile Skincare*
Michael Flanagan, Ph.D., *Flanagen*
Liz Flyntz, *Artist and Curator*
Dan Fried, Ph.D., *St. Peter's University*
Grant Goldner, *Grant Goldner Consulting*
Sigrid Jakob, *Mycologist*
Janina Jeff, Ph.D., *Illumina*
Chris Kennedy, *Artist and Educator*
Ben King, Ph.D., *NYU Langone Health*
Marjorie Linares, Ph.D., *Troy Corporation*
Mandana Manzari, Ph.D., *Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center*
Waldo Matuska, *Thing Connect*
Jo Meszaros, Ph.D., *Columbia University*
Paolo Mita, Ph.D., *NYU Langone Health*
Lucia Monge, *Artist and Educator*
Madeline Niemackle, *Mushroom Revival*
Aki Nikolaidis, Ph.D., *Child Mind Institute*
Kelly O'Donnell, Ph.D., *Macaulay Honors College, CUNY*
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