

2021 TECHTALENT SPEAKERS



Stuti Arora

Computer Science Student | University of Minnesota

Stuti is a Computer Science freshman at the University of Minnesota and an incoming intern at U.S. Bank. In high school, she interned at Land O' Lakes. Stuti was the Programming Lead of her World-Championship qualifying robotics team. She founded GEARs (Girls in Engineering And Robotics) program which inspires girls to join and stay in STEM. Winner of NCWIT Aspirations and Target TWIST awards, Stuti also received an Honorable Mention in the NYT Student Editorial Contest for her article: "Why Aren't More Girls Pursuing Careers in Tech?" In college, she continues her learning while inspiring other young women to pursue STEM.

Sameer Badlani, MD, FACP

Chief Digital Officer & Executive Vice President for Technology Services | M Health Fairview

Dr. Badlani is healthcare and digital thought leader leveraging his experience as a clinician and technology executive to transform the delivery and consumer experience in healthcare and wellness. His focus is on operational and digital transformation by deploying innovation at scale, maximizing technologies, and process improvement to generate both business and clinical outcomes. He is passionate about learning, developing leaders, and advocating for the organization's diversity and inclusion commitments.

In his current role, Dr. Badlani focuses on designing and deploying the modern digital strategy to transform healthcare delivery into more consumer-focused, safe and high-quality clinical care. He believes that succeeding with the digital transformation scale is a function of striking a balance between consumer experience, operational efficiency, innovation, and integration. In addition to leading the digital transformational initiatives, he is responsible for core information technologies, cybersecurity, data & analytics, informatics, marketing, and experience design functions. A nationally recognized advisor, educator, and speaker on topics across digital transformation, innovation, and transformation, Dr. Badlani is a strategic advisor and board member for startups and nonprofit organizations. Dr. Badlani received his medical degree from the University of Delhi in India.





Allison Barmann

Executive Director | Genesys Works

Allison has spent her career working at the intersection of business and social impact. Before leading Genesys Works – Twin Cities, she was the Strategy & Learning Vice President at the Bush Foundation where she oversaw grantmaking in education, native nation building and social business. Previously, Allison was a strategy consultant with McKinsey & Company and directed the Itasca Project, an alliance of CEOs and civic leaders addressing economic competitiveness in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. She also worked at a technology start-up in San Francisco and as a Plant Engineer at 3M. She earned her MBA from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University and her B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from MIT.

John Bartucz

Teacher | Rochester CTECH (High School)

Professor | Rochester Community and Technical College and Winona State University

Founder | Rochester Area Youth Tech Foundation

President | CS Teachers Association of Minnesota

John grew up in Toronto, Canada before attending Princeton University to study Computer Science. He worked in computational finance in New York and London, moved to Minnesota, earned his master's degree in Computer Science and started a consulting company. He currently teaches Computer Science and I.T. in Rochester. John set up the Rochester Area Youth Tech Foundation to provide refurbished laptops and internet to students without access. He started Girls Who Code clubs at every middle school in Rochester, a CoderDojo at the Boys And Girls Club, and the Queen City Computer Club for female, LGBTQ, and non-binary students.



Tawanna Black

Founder & CEO | Center for Economic Inclusion

Tawanna is a nationally recognized thought leader known for influencing, inspiring, and equipping cross-sector leaders to transform a personal conviction for equality into actions that produce equitable and thriving communities. Tawanna has led multi-sector collaboratives for more than 20 years in Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, and now in Minnesota. In 2017, Tawanna launched the Center for Economic Inclusion, the nation's first organization dedicated exclusively to creating inclusive regional economies by equipping public and private sector employers to dismantle



Tawanna Black - cont.

Founder & CEO | Center for Economic Inclusion

institutional racism and build shared accountability for inclusive economic growth. As Founder and CEO, Tawanna leads a team of people who offer ground-breaking consulting products and services to move businesses and local and regional governments from diversity and inclusion programs to triple bottom line results that are good for employees, employers, and communities; foster shared accountability for regional inclusive growth; change the narrative about the economic imperative and value of closing racial wealth gaps. Tawanna is a Non-Resident Senior Fellow of the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program. Her accomplishments and civic leadership have been recognized by Twin Cities Business Magazine, Minneapolis- St. Paul Business Journal, and Minnesota Business Magazine among others. She is also a recipient of the prestigious Bush Fellowship.

Shane Bratvold

**Director, Business Information Security Officer,
Information Security Risk Management | Thomson Reuters**



Sarah Carter

**STEM/Computer Science Integration Specialist | Minnesota
Department of Education**

Sarah Carter provides technical assistance to districts and teachers and supports the integration of computer science into Minnesota's Academic Standards. Sarah has 20 years of experience in education, as a science producer for a children's television show, outreach manager for a gender-equitable STEM program, professional development specialist, librarian at a science and math teacher resource library, and a classroom teacher. Sarah has a B.A. in elementary education with a concentration in science and math from the University of St. Thomas and MLIS from St. Catherine University.



Greg Cunningham

Senior Executive Vice President & Chief Diversity Officer | U.S. Bank

Greg joined U.S. Bank in 2015 as Vice President of Customer Engagement. Greg's mission is to make diversity, equity and inclusion a business imperative. In order to do this, he focuses on workplace culture, customer loyalty, supplier diversity, and community outreach. His DEI expertise has been showcased in national and regional media outlets, including Fortune, Bloomberg, American Banker, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, and the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal. Ebony Magazine included Greg on its Power 100 list in 2018.



Greg Cunningham - cont.

Senior Executive Vice President & Chief Diversity Officer | U.S. Bank

marketing for the organization. His non-work engagements are a reflection of his worldview. Greg is a member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity (the Boule') and serves on the National Board of Directors for the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) the nation's largest and most effective minority higher education organization.

Greg has a BA in marketing from UNCF member school Clark-Atlanta University and an MBA from Fordham University. He is a Pittsburgh native.



Jade Denson

VP Programming & Member Experience | Minnesota Technology Association

Jade is a passionate relationship builder responsible for finding ways to deepen MnTech's partnerships in the community. Jade's work involves identifying impactful engagement opportunities for MnTech members and seeking out ways to collaborate with other Minnesota organizations who are driving technology and innovation forward. Her investment in an inclusive technology workforce is most recently showcased in her previous role with Genesys Works Twin Cities involving securing and stewarding partnerships with fortune 500 companies to provide IT internship opportunities for underserved high school students. Jade's role at MnTech combines her personal and professional values of fostering innovation and collaboration while keeping people at the forefront.

Sareen Dunleavy Keenan

Senior Program Officer | Greater Twin Cities United Way

Sareen Dunleavy Keenan leads a \$10M portfolio of grantmaking at the Greater Twin Cities United Way focused on wealth building for young people. As an innovator, Sareen aligns technical assistance with strategic philanthropic investments to amplify outcomes within public and private systems. In partnership with 16 school districts statewide, Career Academies partners are creating grade 9-14 career pathways focused on wealth building. Sareen has led work in dual-enrollment and career and technical education for Minneapolis College, and founded Heartwood Montessori, a non-profit children's house.





Shanice Gipson

Technical Associate | VMLY&R

Shanice is a Kansas City native that has seen and experienced the lack of access to resources depending on one's zip code. After four years of working in the Social Work field, she had the foresight to see how technology was shaping our daily lives. After completing Prime Digital Academy, she started her job as a developer at VMLY&R where she enjoys meeting her clients' needs and working in the DEI TECH efforts. With her strong desire to serve her community and solve problems, she serves on the leadership team of WeCodeKC, a non-profit that exposes kids in Kansas City's urban core to tech and teaches them how to code. She continues to learn and solve problems to empower and improve people's lives through code. She works to inspire others to pursue a career in tech.

Megan Grimm

Director of Talent Acquisition | Target

In her current role, Megan leads Target's Campus Recruitment and Early Career hiring strategy and her team is responsible for designing and driving strategies with colleges, universities, and a variety of external partner organizations that help to advance Target's talent outcomes across the enterprise. Megan has been with Target for 15 years in various Human Resources leadership roles in Talent Acquisition and as an HR generalist.

Megan is passionate about creating new and innovative ways for talent to interact with Target and finding ways to provide meaningful development and career experiences to invest in the future workforce. Megan has Bachelor's degrees in Human Resources + Management and Marketing from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Jennifer Hauschildt

Vice President, Human Resources | Uponor

Jennifer Hauschildt is currently the Vice President of Human Resources for Uponor North America, a leading manufacturer of PEX piping and systems. She previously served as the company's Chief Information Officer. Jennifer's unique ability to shift between two very diverse disciplines, human resources and technology, has provided her with many interesting career opportunities, making her an interesting asset to the companies she has worked for. She also held senior leadership positions in multiple functions at Thomson Reuters.

Jennifer is also passionate about community service and currently serves on the Foundation board of the Minnesota Technology Association and the Board of Directors for MidWestOne Bank, a publicly traded community bank. She earned a B.A. in Mathematics from Gustavus Adolphus College and an MBA from the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota.



Alicia Henderson

Director of Technology | Target

In her current role, Alicia leads teams responsible for various warehouse management products that support Target's Supply Chain capabilities. Alicia has been with Target for 13 years in different technology leadership positions. She is passionate about building diverse teams and helping team members accomplish their career goals. Alicia has a Masters in Software Systems from the University of St. Thomas.



Claire Holmes

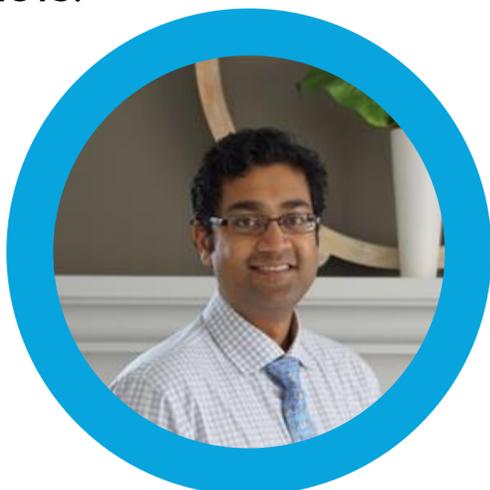
Student | Mayo High School, Rochester

Claire is currently a senior at Mayo High School in Rochester. She has an interest in STEM-related fields from academic to extracurricular. Claire plans to attend college in the fall to study engineering - possibly mechanical or aerospace.

Alexandra Holter, Ph.D.

STEAM Magnet Coordinator | Brooklyn Center Community Schools

Alexandra Holter started teaching middle school science in 2008 with Union Public Schools in Tulsa, OK. In 2016 she joined Brooklyn Center Community Schools (BCCS) as a middle/high school science teacher. She is currently the elementary STEAM magnet coordinator at Brooklyn Center Elementary. Prior to BCCS Alexandra was an adjunct professor at Oklahoma State University, where she completed her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in 2015.



Ruchir Jaipuriyar

Sr. Manager, Applications, Digital Advisor Services | RBC Wealth Management

Ruchir mentors/develops software engineers and helps RBC Wealth Management grow by continuing to expand the internship program and bringing on new talent for the firm. Ruchir also prides himself on helping his team design and build the next generation of wealth management products, which helps financial advisors stay ahead of challenges. Ruchir's main focus is practicing servant leadership.



Thomas Juranek

Software Engineer II | Nextek Development

Thomas is a motivated software engineer with a background in web development and sales. He is Currently working with React, .NET Core, and NodeJS. Software Guild alumni.

Caroline Karanja

CEO | Hack the Gap

Caroline Karanja is a technology leader with a passion for increasing inclusion and equity. She develops digital products, technology solutions and consulting services to increase equity and inclusion within organizations as a path for retention, growth, and innovation. She is the founder and CEO of Guided Pulse (formerly 26 Letters), an action driven DEI solutions platform and leads Hack the Gap, a community-driven initiative focused on getting and keeping more women in tech. Caroline is passionate about using data, insight and learning opportunities to understand and address diversity, equity and inclusion challenges in organizations. She is also active in the local entrepreneurial and technology ecosystem and is on the board of Minne*.



Tracie Karsjens

Director of Engineering | Granicus

Tracie has 20+ years of experience in development, architecture, management, and consulting. She is passionate about equity in the software industry and the importance of treating people fairly.



Sean Lennon

Chief Information Officer | Medtronic

Sean leads the development and execution of global strategies that help Medtronic more fully leverage its scale, improve customer and employee user experiences, and harness the power of technology to support global growth and operational efficiency.

Sean joined Medtronic with more than 30 years of experience and a demonstrated capability to lead in a CIO role within healthcare, including senior leadership positions in several pharmaceutical companies. Most recently, Sean served as SVP and Global CIO at Allergan where he was responsible for leading global IT operations and services and creating the digital strategy for the enterprise. While there, he led the successful consolidation of more than 50 ERP systems into a single-instance SAP platform and helped establish the company's cross-functional digital leadership council focused on differentiating Allergan in the marketplace. In each leadership role of his career, Sean established IT as a critical driver for business performance and growth through the application of data, insights and technology to optimize operations and deliver new value to customers.

Sean has deep experience and proven capabilities in IT operations, digital transformation, data & security, and enterprise transformation. Sean has been recognized externally on numerous occasions, and most recently was named one of the "Top Technology Executives to Watch in 2019."





Andrea Markstrom

Chief Information Officer | Taft Law

Andrea is responsible for firm-wide information technology and security initiatives across all of Taft's offices and practices areas. Bringing more than 25 years of experience to the firm, Andrea has a track record of success defining business strategy, developing teams and leading technology and operations departments for large law firms and corporate organizations. Prior to joining Taft, she served as the Chief Information and Technology Officer for a large law firm based out of NYC, and spent time leading technology organizations for Faegre Baker Daniels LLP and Target Corporation based in Minnesota. As founder of the non-profit professional networking forum i.WILL, Inspiring Women Igniting Leadership & Learning, Andrea is committed to supporting and empowering women.

Mike McNamara

Executive Vice President, Chief Information Officer | Target

Mike is a member of Target's executive leadership team. He is responsible for the strategic direction and management of the enterprise technology systems that elevate the shopping experience for Target's guests and team members. Mike also leads Target's technology roadmap, enterprise data analytics, and business intelligence strategy. Prior to joining Target in 2015, Mike spent more than 17 years at European-based retailer Tesco, most recently as the Chief Information Officer. Mike is a member of the Board of Directors for Hawaiian Airlines and Genesys Works - Twin Cities, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing pathways to career success for high school students in underserved communities through skills training, meaningful work experience and impactful relationships. Mike has a Bachelor's degree in Engineering from University College Dublin.



Laura Miller

Talent & Development Manager | Thomson Reuters

Laura is passionate about creating impactful and inspiring learning experiences for leaders across Thomson Reuters. She is responsible for key talent leadership programs and is driven to deliver learning experiences that enhance, enlighten and empower our leaders.





Rosie Nestingen

Tech Transformation Director | Best Buy

Rosie works in Digital & Technology at Best Buy. Her role is to create creative solutions to engage with, recruit, and retain tech talent. This work is in support of Best Buy's tech talent transformation with the recent announcement to hire 1000 technologists with 30% of those individuals identifying as women, Black, Indigenous and Latinx. Rosie was also recently named one of the Twin Cities Business Top 100 People to Know in 2021.

Erin Olson

Director of Strategic Research | RealTime Talent

Erin's research career spans economic development, housing, transportation, workforce analysis, and bringing new and intersectional approaches to addressing labor recruitment and retention challenges in Minnesota. She provides diverse workforce alignment research services to a broad base of industry leaders in Minnesota, fostering data-informed decision-making and innovation between workforce, higher education, business, and economic development systems to strengthen high-opportunity career pathways.

Erin holds two Masters Degrees in Urban and Regional Planning and Public Health from the University of Minnesota, where she focused on community economic development, housing, and population studies. She also holds a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology.



Michelle Pokrzywinski

Director of Product Engineering & DevOps | Kognitiv

Michelle Pokrzywinski's software teams enable organizations to form collaborative peer-to-peer commerce networks. Michelle has extensive software experience, starting out as a developer at Cargill after receiving her Computer Science degree from the University of North Dakota, and later moving into various leadership roles at companies including C.H. Robinson and WEX. She received her master's degree in the Management of Technology from the University of Minnesota. Michelle's passion is in building empowered teams and creating alignment between business and technology.

Erica Prairie

Director - Early Tech Career Development Programming | Optum

Erica focuses on building more diverse, equitable, and inclusive talent experiences. She has also spent the past several years researching the work of Carol Dweck, the study of Growth Mindset, and trying to help others learn their way forward and fully realize their best self. Erica received her MBA from the University of St. Thomas.



Rob Reynolds

Director of Software Engineering | Nextek Development

Rob was a teacher and a coach prior to being a developer. He has a passion for development and problem solving and enjoys helping other developers with their skills!

Susan Sama

Software Engineer - EEP | Target

Susan Sama is a Software Engineer at Target through the Emerging Engineers Program. Prior to her new role, she interned at Target through the Genesys Works program and then joined the Dream Corps Tech full stack boot camp, which provided the opportunity for her to join Target. When not working, Susan is interested in creating solutions for the community through technology, and is passionate about helping youth in tech.



Cassie Scharber, Ph.D.

**Associate Professor | University of Minnesota
Steering Committee Member | CSforAll-MN**

Dr. Cassie Scharber is an Associate Professor of Learning Technologies within the Department of Curriculum & Instruction at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities. She is also a Steering Committee Member of CSforAll-MN (<https://csforallmn.org>), a group that is committed to increasing the number and diversity of students in computer science. In collaboration with her LT Media Lab colleagues, she is a community engaged scholar who works in partnership with Minnesota K12 school districts on technology integration, digital literacies, online teaching/learning, and computer science education.



Jenna Sprattler

Sr. Network Manager | Thomson Reuters

Solution-oriented, results-driven Technical Specialist with over 5.5 years of enterprise network engineering experience. Jenna has experience working with Multi-Cloud vendor products including AWS, Azure, GCP (Google), and OCI (Oracle). Over the past 1.5 years she has been providing administration and delivery of tasks related to Public Cloud Infrastructure with a focus on networking and automation.

Gabby Spurling

Director of Technology | VMLY&R

Gabby Spurling focuses on architecting client projects and building teams of technical professionals to implement them. She enjoys elements across the development stack, from designing delightful user experiences to using microservices to solve business problems. The common threads across all of her work have been creative problem solving, building intentional processes, and learning from incredible teams.



Nick Stroozas

Recruiter | Granicus

Nick is a corporate recruiter for Granicus with 6+ years of recruiting experience. He has a passion for people and loves that his job has such an outsized impact on both candidates and his company.

Danny Stubbings

Global Technology Executive | Thomson Reuters

Danny leads the Engineering and Operations Organization which provides a portfolio of curated services to Thomson Reuters Technologists. Covering hosting, connectivity, infrastructure software and consulting practices across our on premise, and public cloud estate.

Danny brings with him a proven track record of technology transformation and leadership having previously held the position of Vice President of Data Centre Operations, and Senior Director of Systems Support and Engineering, driving transformative change and improving operational performance.



Kaisa Taipale

Senior Data Scientist | C.H. Robinson

Kaisa Taipale is a senior data scientist with the contractual pricing group at C.H. Robinson. She is responsible for contributing to long-term forecasting models for freight prices, combining quantitative and algorithmic modeling and economic analysis.

Prior to joining C.H. Robinson, Kaisa was an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota working with the Center for Financial and Actuarial Mathematics, running seminars on machine learning and establishing a summer day camp for high school students interested in artificial intelligence.



Jeff Tollefson

President & CEO | Minnesota Technology Association

Jeff leads the overall management and strategic direction of the Minnesota Technology Association, with a focus on enhancing member value and driving community impact. Prior to joining the MnTech in August 2019, Jeff held various leadership roles with Genesys Works, a national nonprofit helping low-income high school students achieve career success in the tech field through skills training and meaningful work experiences.

Before founding Genesys Works' Twin Cities program in 2008, Jeff spent 17 years in the venture capital industry, including ten years as co-founder and General Partner of Crescendo Ventures, an early-stage venture capital firm with more than \$1.1 billion under management and offices in Minneapolis, Palo Alto, and London.

Josh Wadsworth

Associate Manager Tech Transformation | Best Buy

Josh began working for Best Buy in 2009 in Pittsburgh, PA as an Occasional/Seasonal helper. In 2016 Josh was accepted into a new pilot program with Best Buy, giving him an opportunity to do a stretch assignment at the Corporate office for 9 months. During that assignment, he was hired on full-time at the corporate headquarters as a Scrum Product Owner. Recently, Josh has moved into a role that focuses on building programs that provide an opportunity for field employees to have access to careers in technology.



Andrea Wilson Vasquez

Director of Educator Training | Code Savvy

Innovative Instructional Coach | Intermediate District 287

Andrea Wilson Vasquez is a teacher and innovative instructional coach at an alternative high school in Intermediate District 287, and also works as the Director of Educator Training with Code Savvy, a Minnesota non-profit that seeks to expand equitable and engaging computer science education. Andrea is a CS for All Teachers Ambassador where she co-facilitates a newly formed CS Equity and Access Group for CS for All Teachers. She is also a teacher leader in the CSTA CSforELs project and a CSforAll-MN (ECEP) steering committee member.



Michael G. Wulf, Ed.D.

Founder & Executive Director | Minnesota STEM Partnership

Dr. Michael G. Wulf is a passionate leader and volunteer providing opportunities and options in Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) education for underrepresented ethnicities in education and workforce. He creates and enables sustainable programs that develop employable young adults from urban centers here in Minnesota and across the U.S. He is the founder of the Minnesota STEM Partnership (MNSTEM), Chief Operating Officer & Vice-President of the National Black Data Processing Associates (BDPA), and also serves as local National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) Pre-Collegiate Initiative (PCI) Youth Advisor. He understands the need to reinvest in community by sharing his knowledge and providing opportunities in high-tech education in advancing/emerging technology fields. After a 37 year career in IT, he leads MNSTEM with a few part-time staff and dozens of volunteers from STEAM-related fields.

