

BRIDGE_{TO}
YOUTH

IMPACT REPORT

SEPT. 2020 - AUG. 2021



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MESSAGE FROM THE

FOUNDER

It is no secret to anyone that this past school year has been an extraordinary one - from the COVID-19 pandemic, to the important conversations about race to the shock to our global economy. Events this past year have exposed the depth of the inequities that exist in communities facing socioeconomic challenges.

Marginalized youth and families feel the burden of COVID-19 most. The pandemic has required us to social distance and self isolate. Schools have been forced to close and implement online learning. This presents heightened challenges for students from underserved communities, including academic disadvantages, mental health challenges and financial distress.

In the midst of the reality that has been the past year, the BridgeTO Youth program has been a beacon of remarkable resilience and hope.

Through the collective efforts of our volunteers and staff, we have been able to respond to the “new” world and serve our community by:

- Transitioning our tutoring, mentorship and career readiness workshops to online platforms and maintaining engagement with our 48 youth
- Collaborating with our partners (Roche, PwC, BMO and Amazon) to provide unique opportunities for our youth to explore different career options in STEM in an engaging way through business case challenges, mock trials and hackathons
- Providing groceries on a monthly basis to over 45 families to respond to the economic implications of the pandemic which has disproportionately impacted our families
- Launching a mental health and wellness program to support our youth through these challenging times

This year alone, we’ve awarded \$16,000 in scholarships, distributed 17 laptops to our high school graduates, provided 1,800+ warm meals, facilitated 75+ tutoring sessions and much more.

I am immensely grateful to the BridgeTO Youth community for coming together and contributing to this year’s success, all while facing personal and professional challenges. Thank you to our individual sponsors and funding partners at Islamic Relief Canada, the Government of Canada, Sacredhands Canada and United Way for your support and commitment to our cause.

And of course thank you to our passionate and dedicated team of over 100 volunteers, who are already looking ahead, reimagining a more equitable, inclusive and supportive community - even in the midst of a crisis. Lastly, thank you to our youth for your remarkable initiative and resilience.

**With your support, we are ready to move mountains.
And together, only together, we can.**

Sammer Haq
Founder & Executive Director
BridgeTO Youth



OUR MISSION

BridgeTO Youth supports youth from underserved communities across the GTA in overcoming academic, financial and social barriers to success. Through our 3 pillars of **tutoring**, **mentorship** and **partnered events**, we help high school and university level students effectively launch careers in **STEM-related fields**.



It all started when... Sammer Haq, founder of BridgeTO Youth, began tutoring a few high school students from under-served neighbourhoods in Northwest Toronto in senior level Math and Science. After realizing the potential that can be fostered when students are provided with learning opportunities that challenge and support them, BridgeTO was born to reach more students across the GTA. Just a year later, in the summer of 2019, it was registered as a not-for-profit organization.

Today, BridgeTO Youth supports students by providing free tutoring, outreach, mentoring and exclusive events to bridge the gap to success for them to reach their full potential. We believe helping students reach post-secondary education will push them to excel in their later careers, and will therefore improve the future of the communities they are from.

The following impact report is an inside look into what we have accomplished in the 2020-2021 school year.

OUR STORY



YEAR IN REVIEW

In the past year, BridgeTO Youth received an overwhelming amount of support from the greater community. Thanks to our volunteers and partners, the 2020-2021 academic year saw rapid growth and was rich with accomplishments.

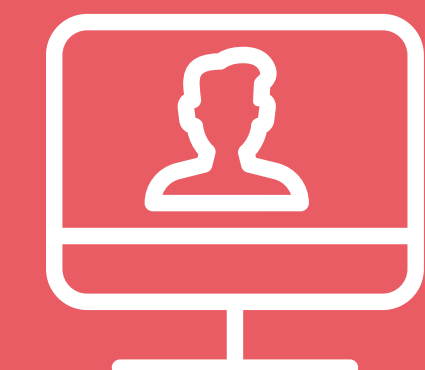
 **17**
High School
Graduates

 **\$16K**
In Scholarships

 **48**
Students Supported from
Priority Neighbourhoods

 **\$10K**
In Student Laptops

 **7**
Exclusive Career
Readiness Events

 **75+**
Tutoring Sessions
Provided

OUR IMPACT

BridgeTO Youth has come a long way since being founded, and we're only just getting started. Here's a snapshot of everything our community has accomplished since 2018.



70

BIPOC Youth Supported



36

High School Graduates



200

Student Applications for 2021/2022 School Year



100+

Volunteer Mentors



\$32K

In Scholarships



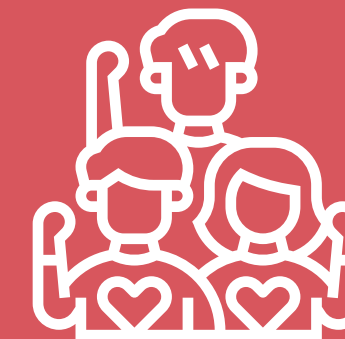
1800+

Grocery Packages and Meals Delivered



\$25K

In Student Laptops



Supported by

100+

Volunteers



Paid for

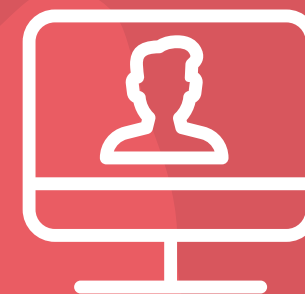
51

University Applications



6

Exclusive Mental Health Workshops



150+

Tutoring Sessions Provided



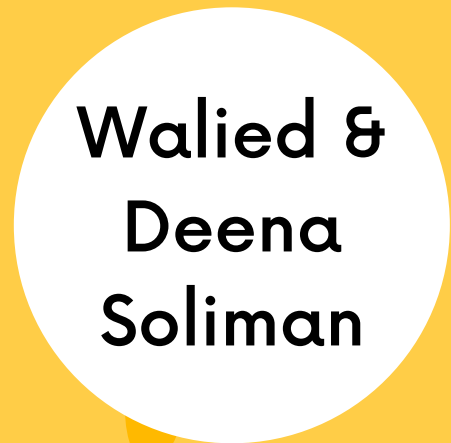
20 Exclusive Events Hosted or Attended

OUR PARTNERS

BridgeTO Youth is funded in part by



Scholarship Sponsors



Grocery Program Partners



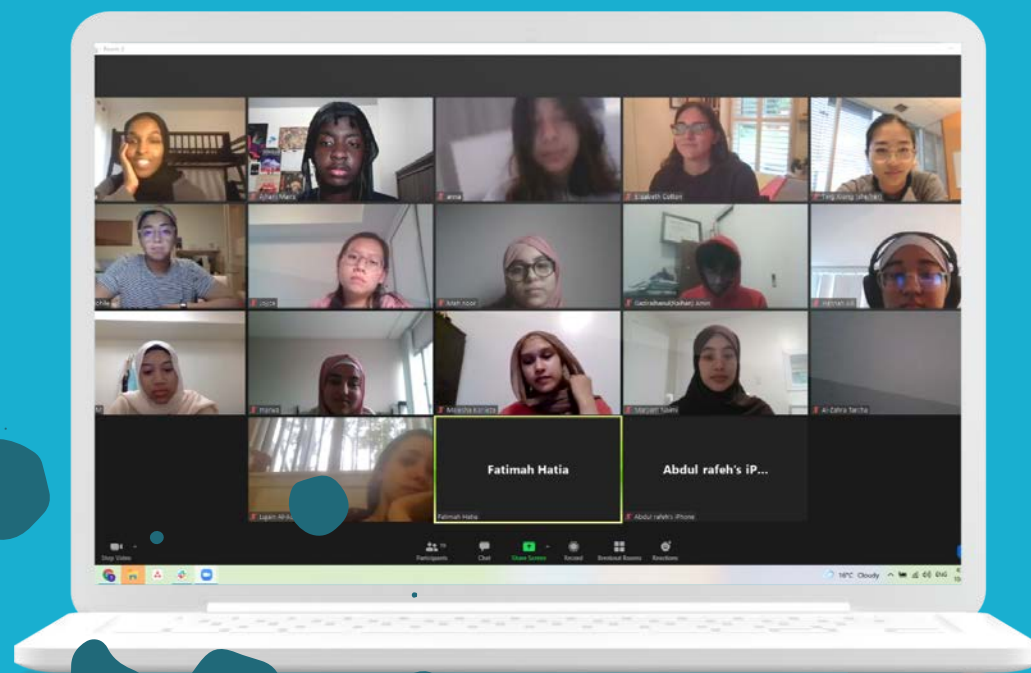
Event Partners



GOING VIRTUAL

To support the needs of underserved communities across the GTA during the COVID-19 pandemic, BridgeTO Youth transitioned all its programs and services to a safe and engaging virtual environment.

COVID-19 and the measures implemented to contain the virus have changed all aspects of life. Social distancing required schools to close and youth and their families to self isolate. The outcomes of self-isolation measures are vast: academic disadvantages due to school closures, mental health challenges brought by social distancing, increased stress as a result of uncertain times, and those already living in situations of disadvantage severely impacted by the current economic downturn.



TUTORING

We successfully transitioned to a remote learning environment, providing tutoring and academic support to our youth **every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 4-6:30PM** using the video conferencing platform Zoom. Sessions were led by a group of over 15 tutors from various academic and professional backgrounds who were able to provide support in all Grade 11 and 12 subjects.

75+
Remote Tutoring
Sessions

MENTAL HEALTH

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has had detrimental effects on the mental health of our youth. Many students from disadvantaged backgrounds rely on schools and support programs for basic necessities and security. With this in mind, we launched the BridgeTO Mental Health program in partnership with a **registered social worker** Tarak Ahmed. Over the course of 6 sessions, Tarak walked our students through a variety of important mental health topics, ranging from stress to grief to self-esteem.

6

Mental Health
Sessions



PARTNERED EVENTS

This year, BridgeTO Youth partnered with multiple companies and industry leaders to provide engaging career readiness workshops and events for our youth. Through a lineup of events including the interview skills workshop with Zainab Walji at **PwC**, the contract law Mock Trial with the Legal and Compliance team at **BMO**, the annual **Roche** STEM event and the first ever BridgeTO Hacks event in partnership with **Amazon Future Engineer**, our students were fully immersed in unique opportunities to prepare them for their future careers.



GROCERY PROGRAM

In 2020, BridgeTO officially initiated its Grocery Program, a program that aims to relieve the economic burden of the COVID-19 pandemic on local families. In partnership with Sacred Hands Canada and funded in part by our BridgeTO community, the program provides families from underserved communities with free grocery deliveries for a year. Thanks to our volunteers, deliveries are made monthly and contain staple food items, hygiene products and other essentials.



1800

Warm Meals
Provided

MENTORSHIP

Our mentorship program pairs students with professionals who help them achieve their academic and career goals. Along with our remote social events, mentors check in with their mentees regularly through both Zoom and text. This year, the program connected all 60 students with 21 mentors, including Zainab Walji from PwC, Leena Latafat from CP24, Kashif Saya from NBC and seasoned investment professional Omar Khalifa.



FEATURED

EVENTS

"BridgeTO was able to show me the many different pathways my life can take... through the amazing events I was able to attend, I met people from different careers and industries, and I got to see how they were able to get to certain places in their lives."

- Rauha, BridgeTO 2021 Graduate,
now studying Engineering Science at UofT



BRIDGE TO HACKS

In May 2021, BridgeTO collaborated with Amazon Future Engineer on our largest event yet, BridgeTO Hacks, a province wide virtual hackathon and the first-ever "Your Voice is Power" code competition in Canada. This interactive, all-day event saw the collaboration of **48 volunteers, 2 corporate sponsors, 3 keynote speakers and 4 esteemed industry professionals as our celebrity judges.** With **60+ student participants**, BridgeTO Hacks proved to be an excellent networking and learning opportunity for our students.

This was not your average coding competition. Participants were given expert advice from speakers, a multi-level training course on Amazon Future Engineer's coding platform, EarSketch, and the opportunity to mix and perform a unique track to our celebrity judges. In the final round of the competition, the winning team of two went home with their very own iPads and Apple Pencils.



THE JUDGING PANEL



Mike Lawless
Head, Amazon Music



Deejay t-jr.
DJ & Sound engineer



Solitair



Susan Ibach
Head, Amazon Future Engineer



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

100% of our youth identify as black, indigenous, people of colour (BIPOC), and as such, our community felt deeply impacted by the distressful events that unfolded over the past two years. As our youth are growing and are attempting to make sense of the world around them, we wanted to connect them with inspiring speakers who could inform, empower, and educate them on the impacts of racism and offer insight on how to thrive despite such barriers.

As part of our commitment to our youth, BridgeTO Youth celebrated Black History Month with a virtual event hosted by CP24 host, Faiza Amin, featuring keynote presenter, Desmond Cole and a panel with Chantal Phillips, Habon Ali, Lawrence Eta and Earl Davis. The event's insightful discussions were accompanied by a lineup of heartfelt performances presented by our very own students. These talents were able to express their personal experiences through spoken word, theatre acts and musical pieces.

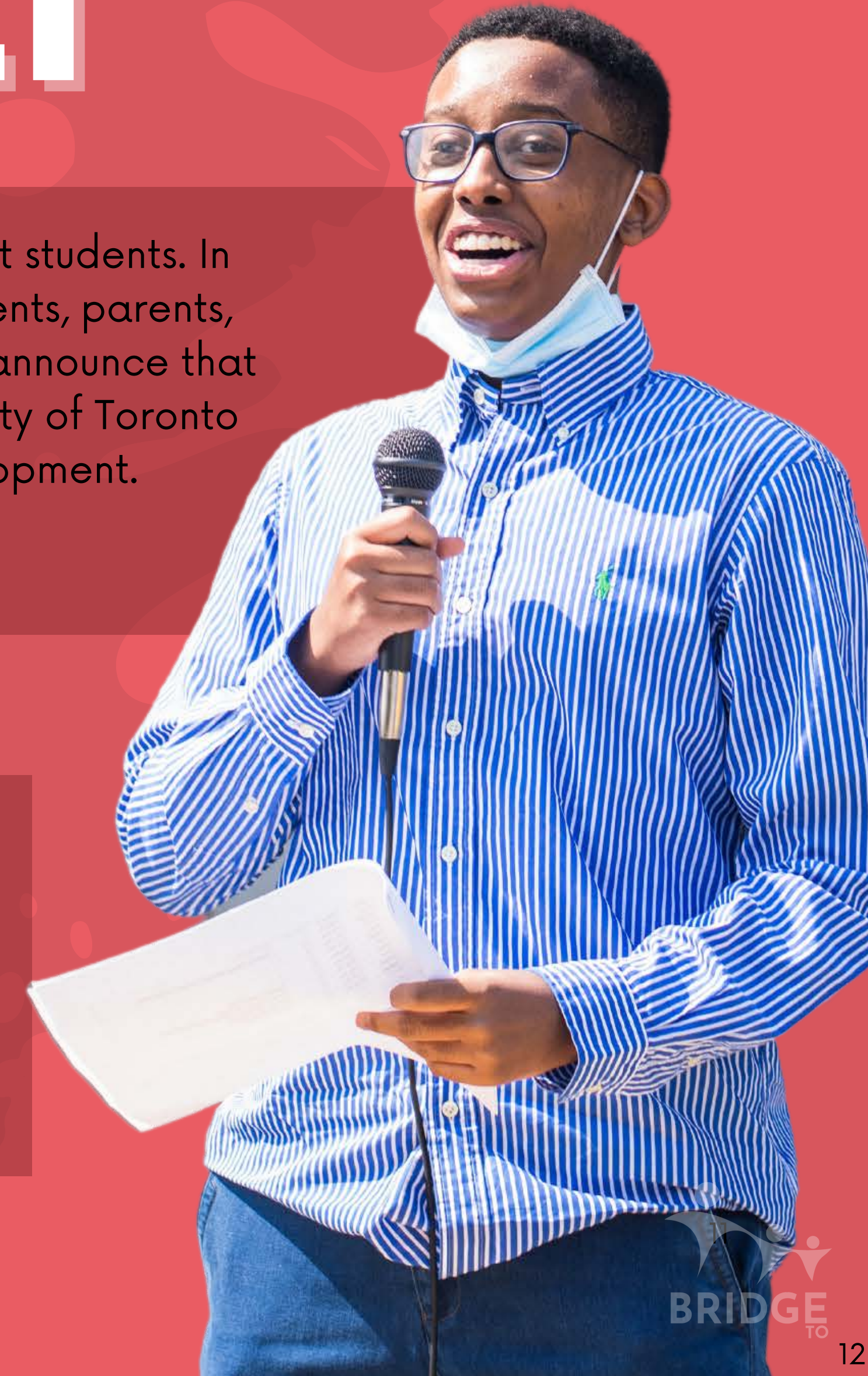
CLASS OF 2021

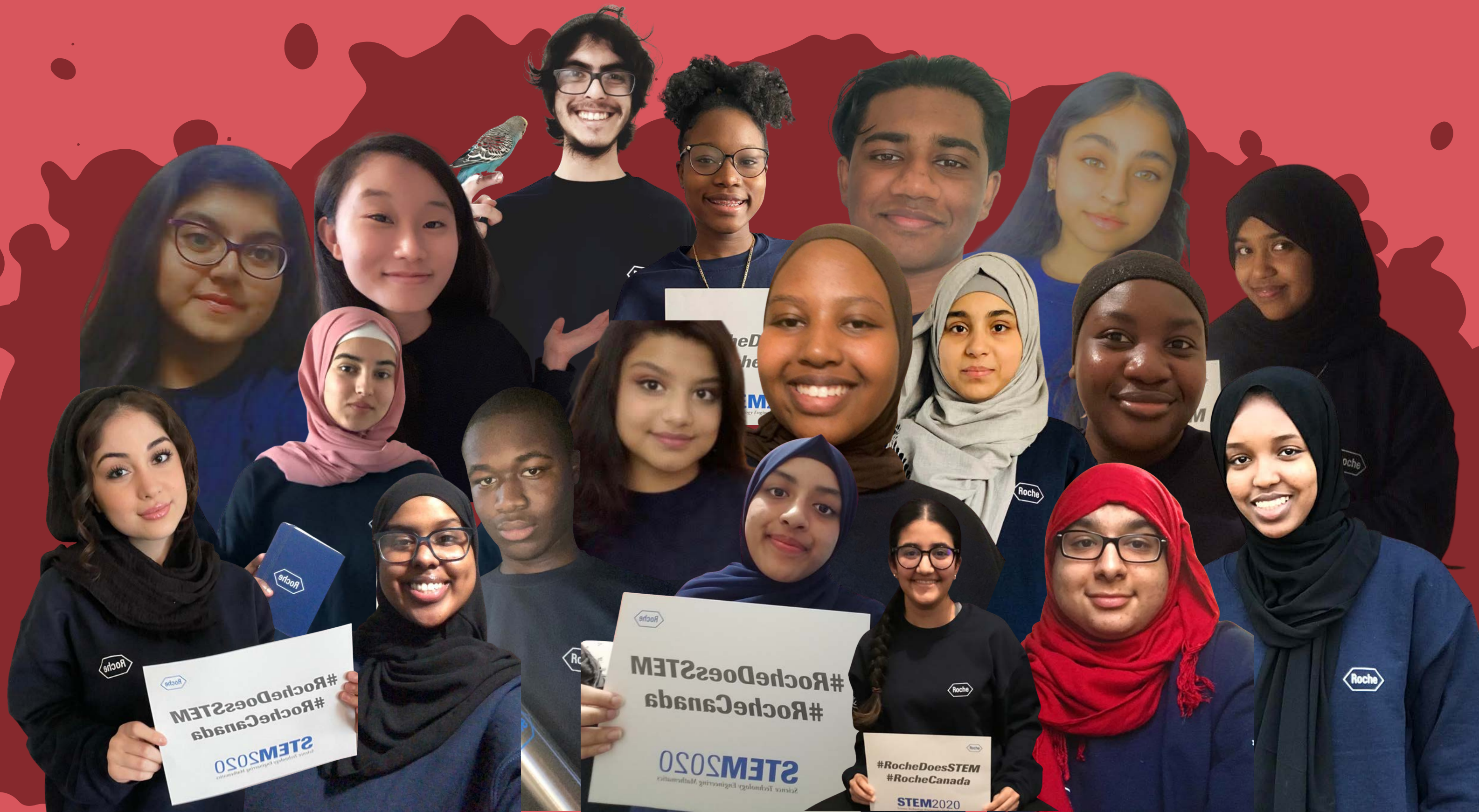
This year, BridgeTO was thrilled to celebrate the high school graduation of 17 of our brilliant students. In August 2021, we were fortunate to have brought together over 90 attendees including students, parents, mentors, and alumni at a socially-distanced outdoor luncheon in Toronto. We are proud to announce that with our support, our graduates will attend various post-secondary schools from the University of Toronto to the University of Ottawa, studying fields ranging from Engineering to International Development. Congratulations Class of 2021!



SCHOLARSHIPS

Part of our mission at BridgeTO is to help students from underserved communities overcome financial barriers to success. Thanks to the support of our generous partners, we were able to provide **\$16K in scholarships to 4 BridgeTO students in 2021**. Our BridgeTO Superstar Yasmine Ahmed was also awarded the prestigious **\$100K Loran Award**.





ABOUT OUR GRADS

- 83% of graduates said BridgeTO greatly helped them with their post-secondary applications
- 50% of students said they chose to pursue a STEM related field after participation in our program
- 71% of students reported they received relevant industry exposure and career advice with BridgeTO

"BridgeTO introduced me to the idea of being a doctor, and that is something I never would've thought for myself. The people at BridgeTO showed me that I could put in the time, stay motivated and work to accomplish amazing things."

- Jayla, BridgeTO 2021 Graduate
now studying at Brock University

100%

of our Grade 12 students
graduated and were accepted
into post-secondary schools

PARTNER WITH US

How Can You Support Us?

We are looking to partner with organizations to host events that will challenge and inspire our young minds. Our team will work with you to come up with creative ideas to get involved! Previous events have included a Hackathon with Amazon, a mock trial event with BMO, a financial literacy competition with PwC, a business pitch competition with KPMG and more!

This is an exclusive opportunity for individuals and organizations to make a positive impact at the grassroots level.

Connect With Us!

Whether you see yourself fitting in as a volunteer, donor, scholarship sponsor or BridgeTO event partner, we look forward to working with you to continue making a positive impact at the grassroots level in under-served communities across the Greater Toronto Area.

Say Hello!

If you or your organization are interested in joining our cause, please contact sammer.haq@bridgetoyouth.com and visit our social media to learn how you can get involved.

 @bridge.to

 @bridgeTO

 bridgetoyouth.com

 contact@bridgetoyouth.com



MEET THE TEAM

2021-2022

BOARD



Founder,
Executive Director
Sammer Haq



Vice
Chair
Amal Ghedi



Committee
Chair
Salma Shaikh

YOUTH FACING

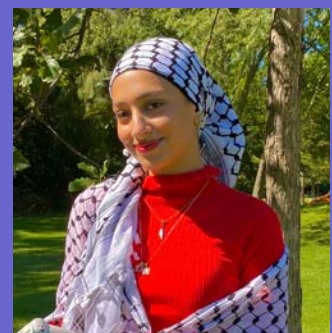
Youth Program



Youth Program
Director
Salma Shaikh



Youth
Coordinator
Chasity Hewitt-Brown



Youth
Coordinator
Saja El Sayah



Youth
Coordinator
Whitney Blessing



Youth
Coordinator
Denisha Williams



Tutor
Lead
Aayman Karim

OPERATIONS

Marketing



Marketing
Director
Fiza Malik



Graphic
Designer
Joyce Ni



Graphic
Designer
Tianna Dip



Website
Manager
Kim Gonzales



Tutor
Lead
Anwar Abdi



Tutor
Lead
Afnan Musa



Tutor
Lead
James Fan



Mentorship
Director
Blaire Lam-Greene



Mentorship
Director
Baithat Adeyinka



Special Events
Director
Aisha Durrani



Content
Creator
Nastaxa Ahmed



Content
Creator
Safya Nabiyyar



Blog Content
Curator
Rauha Ahmed



Finance
Director
Saraf Alam

Special Projects



Special Projects
Director
Mikhiel Jaffer



Special Projects
Director
Ammaar Jan



Reporting &
Analytics
Ashley Soriano



Reporting &
Analytics
Malak Ali

Special Events

Finance



Finance
Director
Alex Peav



Finance
Member
Ilhan Bade

Human Resources



Human Resources
Director
Izza Dawood



Human Resources
Director
Javaria Ahsan