

# Rising S.T.A.R.S. Story Book

*“Change A Girl, Change The World.”*

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# Boilerplate

*[Standard use for electronic and print materials like press releases, website, etc.]*

Rising S.T.A.R.S. (Sisters of Tomorrow Aspiring to Realize Success) is a mentoring organization that helps tween minority girls grow confidently into successful women. We partner with schools and out-of-school care providers to deliver seminars, summer enrichment camps, and tutoring programs that create a safe space for minority girls to overcome their insecurities and develop the inner strength needed to succeed in-and-out of the classroom.

# Our Vision

We envision a world where every girl has the tools needed to become a successful woman of positive influence. As mentors, tutors, and role models, we exist to help minority girls circumvent the strain of economic, racial, and/or gender inequality and create a new reality for themselves—one defined by sisterhood, mentorship, love, service, and freedom.

# Our Mission

To help minority girls create and achieve their vision of success. We fulfill this mission through our seminars, summer enrichment camps, tutoring programs, and scholarships, which are designed to address the unique academic and non-academic concerns of minority girls.

# Our Values

**Authenticity:** Successful women live authentically. We want our girls to act as their true selves, and we encourage them to express their personalities, value their gifts, and affirm the authenticity of others.

**Safety:** We create a safe environment where girls feel free to ask tough questions and attempt new challenges without risk of ridicule from their peers.

**Community:** By emphasizing sisterhood and service, we instill the importance of community and train our girls to apply these values to their relationships outside of Rising S.T.A.R.S.' programs.

**No Excuses:** We expect each of our Rising S.T.A.R.S. to complete assignments, attend workshops, and fully participate in program activities. Our high expectations reflect our belief in our girls' ability to accomplish what they set their minds to.

# Our Story

Rising S.T.A.R.S. began with a conversation in 2011 between our founders Camille Kenner, Christian Nelson, and Katrina Rainer. The three friends had recently graduated from Michigan State University and were teaching middle school in Northern Virginia. As they settled into their first years of teaching, they often came together to discuss the joys and stresses of being educators. In talking about their experiences, they realized a shared love for helping students find the confidence and motivation to achieve.

They also noticed, however, several common factors that got in the way of many students' ability to develop the inner strength needed to thrive—things like negative self-images and teasing; stress from high stakes testing and academic struggles; or trouble in the community or at home that made focusing on school nearly impossible.

The three women certainly related to the turmoil some of their students faced, remembering their own feelings of inadequacy brought on by not feeling smart enough or believing their physical appearance was their only attribute. Helping them overcome such negative beliefs was a caring, adult mentor who assisted them in discovering their true worth. And it was finding their inner worth that allowed them to exhibit more positive behaviors toward themselves and others.

Using their own experiences as inspiration, Kenner, Nelson, and Rainer began building an organization to facilitate mentoring relationships like the ones they benefited from. Central to their model was the belief that every girl deserves to be free: Free to be quirky, free to be confident, and free to live out her dreams. Rising S.T.A.R.S. would be a place where that type of freedom existed.

Our founders also knew creating such a safe space was particularly important for minority girls who face myriad challenges in society. From health outcomes, to educational attainment and economic security, women and girls from racial and ethnic minority communities in the United States fare far worse than their white counterparts. And stigmatizing images in the media only deepen the wounds of social, cultural, and economic marginalization. (See “Why Minority Girls?”)

# Our Story (Cont.)

As African-American women, Kenner, Nelson, and Rainer created Rising S.T.A.R.S. with the conviction that the needs of minority girls are unique and require a mentoring approach tailor-made to address their academic and non-academic concerns.

# Our Model

Rising S.T.A.R.S. delivers seminars, summer enrichment camps, and tutoring programs for tween minority girls (grades 6-8) that create a safe space for minority girls to overcome their insecurities and develop the inner strength needed to succeed in-and-out of the classroom.

As educators, we know the limitations teachers face in addressing student issues that are not academic in nature, yet have everything to do with how well a student performs. We help educators (schools and out-of-school care providers) by focusing on the developmental issues they rarely have time to address.

*Road to Womanhood*—a signature curriculum developed by the founders of Rising S.T.A.R.S.—is the guiding model we use throughout our seminars and summer camps. *Road to Womanhood* is distinguished by six principles of success:

1. **Sisterhood Over Selfishness** – Girls learn to respect and value their peers as sisters not competitors.
2. **Healthy Lives Start with Healthy Choices** – Girls learn how to make healthy choices in nutrition, exercise, and relationships.
3. **We Honor Ourselves Through a Positive Self-Image** – Girls learn how to navigate negative media images and develop a positive sense of self.
4. **Academic Achievement Creates Opportunity** – Girls learn study skills and how to advocate for their own success in the classroom.
5. **Financial Education Leads to Financial Freedom** – Girls learn financial basics and the importance of responsible financial behaviors.
6. **Service Builds Community** – Girls learn to become good stewards of the community and serve and care for others.

# Our Model (Cont.)

Created using Benjamin Bloom's "Bloom's Taxonomy," our curriculum caters to every type of learner through engaging discussions, interactive projects, reflections, field trips, speakers, and applications with technology. This process allows our girls to learn, remember, analyze, apply, evaluate, and create with the six principles of success.



# Get Involved

When girls have the tools to succeed and contribute to society, our entire world benefits. Which means, there is a place for every one, even YOU, in our movement to help minority girls reach their highest potential. What should you do? We're glad you asked.

## Schools and Out-of-School Care Providers

Bring Rising S.T.A.R.S. to your classroom or community center. We'll work with you to create a weeklong camp or one-time seminar based on our *Road to Womanhood* curriculum that addresses the academic and non-academic needs of the minority girls you serve. Contact us to bring Rising S.T.A.R.S. to your school or center.

## Parents and Community Members

Do you have a group of adolescent minority girls that you regularly care for or mentor? We can create a seminar for your group to address specific issues like self-esteem, understanding the media, creating positive relationships, or other important areas of concern. Contact us to discuss creating a seminar for your group of tween minority girls. [[Link to contact page or email address](#)]

## Donors

Rising S.T.A.R.S. relies on the generous support of our donors to continue our work. We welcome financial contributions from individuals, businesses, and foundations to support our general operations or to sponsor the cost of one of our camps or seminars.

We also welcome in-kind donations of supplies, which help us and our partners deliver our programs at the lowest possible cost.

# Get Involved (Cont.)

## Volunteers

We recruit caring adults to serve as program mentors throughout the year. If you've never mentored before, don't worry! We train mentors in our *Road to Womanhood* curriculum and provide a structured setting for volunteers to learn the ropes of mentoring.