i.c.stars Celebrates 50th Class of Turning Underserved Young Adults Into Technology Leaders

Non-profit with operations in Chicago and Milwaukee hires two graduates as new staff leaders

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES, June 8, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- i.c. stars, which develops leaders through a technology training program for underserved young adults, has launched its 50th cohort with 20 participants from City of Chicago neighborhoods. The 16-week program prepares young adults with a high school diploma or GED for a career in the rapidly expanding field of technology.

Founded in 1999 by Sandee Kastrul, i.c.stars drives change through education, training and opportunity. i.c.stars provides underserved young adults with technology-based workforce development, community leadership training, internships and job placement. i.c.stars has an 83 percent placement rate and 96 percent of alumni volunteer after graduation.

i.c. stars has also hired two graduates to strengthen its training team:

-Larry Cowans has been named program manager for i.c.stars. A graduate of one of the first i.c.stars classes, Larry has had a successful career in a variety of industries using 3D Design. Most recently as a Sr. Process Plant Designer, Project Manager and Applications Specialist at ECE Design.

Cowans will be responsible for the program's strategic direction, overseeing content and methods. He will work with corporate partners, evaluate certifications, and ensure that program graduates have acquired the skills that employers most value.

-Cristhian Romero will be the Technology Training Manager for i.c.stars, working in the Chicago office. He is also a program graduate (from the 15th cohort) and brings a wealth of technical knowledge to his new role of Training Manager, as well as a personal understanding of students' stresses.

Romero will conduct all technical classes, introducing the core fundamentals like HTML, Python, JavaScript, C++, and SQL. He will also be available to interns, acting as a resource and coach during the day.

Cowans and Romero return to i.c.stars as the non-profit organization is expanding. In addition to its Chicago and Milwaukee training programs, i.c.stars plans to soon announce a third Midwest location.

Says Cowans: "Today, we stress Python, CSS, SQL, and all the Cloud methodologies. My job will be to work with a team and make sure that the instruction we give keeps pace with the fast-moving IT demands of tomorrow.

"I want to motivate and encourage each trainee," he says. "They must believe in themselves and give the work their whole heart. Many of our students come from challenging backgrounds, and through challenges, they have developed drive and resilience. I'll help them channel that resilience to the intense i.c.stars training program. It is the first step in their technical career path, where they will become leaders and mentors for those that follow."

As a former i.c.stars participant, Romero feels close to each new class and sees them through two lenses. "I understand their fears and concerns. I recognize their drive, ambition, and tenacity," says Romero. "I ask each one: do you want something different? The most rewarding part is when I see an intern make a breakthrough or turn a corner. They start believing in themselves."

The 50th cohort will graduate on July 21st. At that point, new graduates will begin their tech careers, and receive support from i.c.stars for another 20 months. i.c.stars is currently recruiting candidates for its 51st cohort, which will start in August.

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About i.c.stars
Committed to racial equity and social justice, i.c.stars drives change through education, training and opportunity. We provide underserved young adults with technology-based workforce development, community leadership training, internships and job placement.

In Chicago and Milwaukee, i.c. stars offers intensive training followed by 20 months of support. Through project-based learning, our stars work in teams to solve a range of real-world problems. They work with our corporate partners to cultivate leadership skills, learn civics, and develop a community-first mindset.

96% of alumni volunteer after they graduate.

We look for people who have overcome adversity and developed resilience. We seek people with a passion for technology, problem-solving skills, and motivation to help others.

Our program participants learn by doing, by building web-based applications to solve client challenges – with coding, business, and leadership instruction provided along the way. With our

partners and corporate sponsors, our stars gain on-the-job experience and develop the professional networks needed to jumpstart their careers.

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