

Delaney Fields, Aspire2STEAM Scholarship Recipient

Aspiring Chemical Engineer's Passion for Genetics and Immunology Fuels Desire to Help Research and Discover Cures for Genetic Diseases

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[Aspire2STEAM.org](https://aspire2steam.org), which provides educational scholarships and mentoring to young women and girls who are working toward careers that require education in science, tech, engineering, the arts, or math (STEAM), has awarded Delaney Fields an ASPIRER scholarship made possible through a kind donation from CompTIA. CompTIA is a leading voice and advocate for the \$5 trillion global information technology ecosystem; and the estimated 75 million industry and tech professionals who design, implement, manage, and safeguard the technology that powers the world's economy.



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“

I'd see my work as being something that is helping towards changing the lives of people with genetic diseases.”

Delaney Fields

Currently, Delaney is a busy junior at North Carolina State University, majoring in Chemical Engineering with a biomolecular concentration and a minor in both Mathematics and Biotechnology. Delaney hopes to one day use her degree in chemical engineering to work in a genetics or immunology lab and be a part of the ongoing research for genetic diseases.

After much research, Delaney found herself at NC State because of its engineering department and proximity to the largest research park in the United States—Research Triangle Park (RTP). Located at the geographic center of three Tier-1 research universities, RTP.org is the largest research park in the United States and a premier global innovation center. Its 7,000 acres house

hundreds of companies, including science and technology firms, government agencies, academic institutions, startups and nonprofits. The close proximity to RTP helped Delaney make valuable connections which led to several internship opportunities.

“On top of her rigorous studies, we’re in awe of Delaney’s many accomplishments and the experiences she’s gained through her internships with forward-thinking organizations,” said Cheryl O’Donoghue, CEO at Aspire2STEAM.org. “Her business acumen is exceptional and she’s already making a number of noteworthy contributions while learning as much as she can about genetics research process transferring and technical development.”

Most recently, Delaney’s Citi Bank robotics internship earned her special recognition as the “Most Valuable Professional” at the completion of the project. She also held a structural engineering internship at Haskell, a pioneering architecture, engineering, and construction firm, as well as an Antisense Oligonucleotide (ASO) manufacturing internship at Biogen in their oligonucleotide facility. At Biogen, their goal is to use large-scale chemical synthesis to create therapeutics that target familial and genetic forms of neurological disorders. Delaney worked with her mentors at Biogen to review current manufacturing procedures for cures that specifically focus on neurological and neurodegenerative genetic diseases. Currently, Delaney is working on genome editing in the CRISPR Lab at her university.



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A big part of Delaney's passion for genetics stems from the work of Jennifer Doudna, American biochemist and 2020 recipient of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Delaney is inspired by Jennifer's and Emmanuelle Charpentier's work on CRISPR gene editing and wants to join them in making an impact in curing genetic diseases. "My goal is to one day meet Jennifer Doudna as she has been a great inspiration to me as a woman in the field of genetics," said Delaney. "Jennifer winning the Nobel Prize was a proud moment for me as I believe it helped opened doors for me and many other young women." One day, Delaney hopes to work in a genetics lab for a large company that reaches many people with its research and development of breakthrough discoveries that ultimately cure genetic diseases.

About Aspire2STEAM

Aspire2STEAM.org is a charitable 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, which has earned Guidestar's Gold Seal for integrity, transparency, and accountability. Aspire2STEAM provides educational scholarships and mentoring to young women and girls who are working hard—aspiring—to achieve careers that require education in science, tech, engineering, the arts, or math. Aspire2STEAM is committed to helping women and girls with a hand up over the incredible barriers of student debt and rising education costs, and the real, ever-present opportunity barriers that keep them out of most male-dominated industries.

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