

Sydney Crush Receives Aspire2STEAM Scholarship

Aspiring Chemical and Paper Science Engineer Sets Sights on Developing Innovative Biodegradable Materials

ANKENY , IOWA , UNITED STATES ,
December 4, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/
-- 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 Sydney Crush 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.



Sydney Crush, Aspire2STEAM Scholarship Recipient

“

I would love to be leading a team of intelligent, value-based individuals and making a positive difference in the world using my scientific knowledge.”

Sydney Crush

Sydney is a third-year undergraduate student double majoring in Chemical Engineering and Paper Science at North Carolina State University. She has experience with research, lab work, and process engineering, and an interest in sustainable materials research, development, and manufacturing.

“We were fascinated to learn about Sydney’s research and internship experiences and how she’s already using her engineering know how to develop replacement materials

that can save our planet,” said Cheryl O’Donoghue, CEO at Aspire2STEAM.org. “Sydney also values her education and has been working part-time since she was 15 years old to help pay for her school tuition and fees. We share this value of hers and applaud her work ethic.”

Sydney's most recent research project spanned five months. She generated fine oak and pine sawdust powder as a biomaterial source, along with agro-residuals, for the research and development of a biodegradable polystyrene (Styrofoam) replacement material. The new biomaterial could help save our oceans from plastic pollution. Also, this year, Sydney held an internship with Domtar, the largest integrated manufacturer and marketer of uncoated freesheet paper in North America, and one of the largest manufacturers of pulp in the world used to make paper, tissue, towels, diapers, personal hygiene items, and fiber-reinforced materials (Domtar.com).

"Through my internship with Domtar, I was able to learn about pulp and paper science and the manufacturing process, along with developing invaluable skills such as collaboration, data analytics, and process management," said Sydney. "I am very grateful to Domtar for giving me this opportunity and I am excited to see how I can apply what I learned in the future!"

In the classroom, Sydney has always been a strong academic performer, receiving many awards in high school including her school's "110% Award," an annual award recognizing a student who goes above and beyond in all that they do. So far she has continued her academic achievement and has been on the Dean's list (a grade point average of 3.5 or higher) each semester since she started at her university. She maintains this high level of accomplishment all while being heavily involved in a variety of clubs and extracurriculars. Outside of the classroom she loves to travel, hike, practice photography,



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play piano, and explore new and exciting foods.

In the future, Sydney hopes to use her scientific and engineering knowledge to one day work with a company engaged in the product development and manufacturing of innovative biodegradable materials. Sydney prides herself on being a highly motivated individual who takes the time to make decisions aligned with her values. She also has a strong philanthropy focus and desires to work for a company that gives back to the community in meaningful ways.

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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Cheryl O'Donoghue

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