

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



Spring 2023
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

HAPPY SPRING!

We hope this newsletter finds you well. As always, this semester was a busy, exciting, and rewarding time to be an EA. The Spring was packed with volunteer outreach events and school visits alike. We are thrilled to have worked with approximately 2,932 students across 19 volunteer events this semester, and 5,572 students at 16 school visits this year!

We were fortunate to be able to hear from so many great alumni through our alumni series this semester, including Marisa Sciolino (2015) Ian Steenstra (2020), and Michael Wentworth (2017). In fact, our Professional Development Coordinator Cullen Sheridan even organized a first of its kind alumni series event open to the entire EA Network! We love hearing what our alums are up to, and being able to ask them questions about their careers and experiences after leaving RPI. If this is something you might be interested in, we'd love to hear from you!

As always, a major highlight of our Spring semester was our annual trip to the Bronx. This year, 17 EAs made the trip. On this trip, EAs participate in school visits at St. Raymond's High School for Boys, St. Raymond's Academy for Girls, and Riverside High School in Yonkers. We also make sure to leave some time for fun adventures while down in the city! (Check out some pictures on the next page.)



Black Family Tech Awareness
Diversity in STEM Day

Speaking of having fun, EAs are making sure being part of the EA family is more than just the educational outreach. This semester saw EAs playing intramural volleyball as a team, singing karaoke at our spring social, and even battling it out in the first ever EA Olympics!

We ended the semester by welcoming a new cohort of EAs! The 22 students in this new cohort make up one of our most diverse cohorts ever by many metrics, including major. We are super excited to welcome these new EAs and are excited to see the great things they do for the organization!



EA Sports playing Volleyball



Our Ice-Skating Social!



St. Raymond's Boys School



Bronx Trip!



Bronx Trip!



Bridge Building at Riverside



New Scotland Elementary



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CURRENT EA SPOTLIGHTS



Jeffryn Rafael

Major: Electrical engineering

Hometown: Paterson, NJ

Internship(s): CHA Consulting Inc.

Other involvements at RPI:

Intramurals soccer, Former RA, I-Persist Calculus I Math Mentor, Student Orientation Advisor

Favorite part of EA: Seeing the students collaborate and generate different ideas that introduces them thinking like engineers.

After RPI: Continue my journey in the electrical engineering field that can potentially land my dream job such as SpaceX or NASA

Leading/working on special projects:

Rise High Internet of Things: student were able to use arduinos and basic circuitry to solve different problems assigned to them by EAs. Their ambition for competition and knowledge lead to a great introduction about Internet of Things to ultimately using the arduinos and Bluetooth modules to pair and communicate to each other.



Mei Mei Dittrich

Major: Chemical Engineering

Hometown: Fairfield, CT

Internship(s): 6 month process engineering co-op at Sanofi in Framingham, MA. I worked at their facility that manufactures rare disease treatments.

Favorite part of EA: The best part about engineering ambassadors is being able to share engineering topics to younger students in a fun way. I also really like that EA's teaching style is focused on engaging activities rather than just lecturing. EA has also been great for meeting other engineering students I may have never met before since it's a mix of people from different majors and school years. Everyone is really friendly and helpful to each other!

After RPI: Looking to go into industry still in the application process, focused on just trying to finish up senior year

Leading/working on special projects:

Last semester, after a year in the making, EA was able to bring SABIC representatives to Algonquin Middle School to debut 3 new presentations and hands on activities. During this spring semester, these presentations have been able to go out to multiple schools so students can get an even better understanding of the life of an engineer.



Cullen Sheridan

Major: Industrial and management engineering

Hometown: Scituate, MA

Internship(s): Worked at Starry Internet as a project intern in Boston helping to schedule and manage mechanical timeline for product testing. I will be working as an industrial engineer for Pratt and Whitney in Maine this summer

Other involvements at RPI: Current president of the RPI robotics club

Favorite part of EA: the community and being able to see the things I work on have an impact on kids. It was a program like EA that made me want to be an engineer

After RPI: I hope to work as an industrial engineer and pursue my MBA

Leading/working on special projects: I have worked to support a Capstone project to improve organization in our storage room. I also helped to revamp presentations for our partnership with SABIC. As well as, developing a presentation and hands on for our partnership with National Grid. Looking forward I hope to grow the Chip champ program to teach kids about computer chips

CONGRATS TO OUR LINCHPIN RECIPIENTS!



Alejandra Barajas



Erin Cohen



Isabella Legovich



Ben Viner



Sarah Burrows



Ilan Pinkus

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Ian Steenstra

Background: Ian graduated from RPI in May 2020 at the start of the COVID pandemic with his BS in Computer & Systems Engineering and joined EA in the Spring of 2017. In the Summer of 2017, Ian worked with Dr. Joe Chow & Elizabeth Herkenham to create one of EA's first sets of REACH presentations on solar panel devices. Outside of EA, Ian was a part of multiple clubs and societies such as HackRPI, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, RCOS, Phalanx Honor Society, Fencing Club, and Active Minds.

After graduating from RPI, I became a Software Engineer at Wayfair on the Content & Delivery team and stayed there for 2 years. During my time at Wayfair, I competed in two hackathons and won the 1st Place Award for my Dynamic Pricing & Content in Emails project and Best Idea Award for my Two-Way Notifications & Data Analysis Tool project. After realizing that I wanted to grow in a different domain, I took a leap of faith and became a Ph.D. Computer Science student at Northeastern University (NEU).



Currently, I am in my first year at NEU, and researching how intelligent virtual agents can provide automated couples counseling to US Veteran couples with PTSD or emotional struggles. I plan to apply for the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) in the upcoming Fall semester to continue my research on a Virtual Couples Counseling Agent for Veteran Couples. I am currently living with my girlfriend in Somerville, MA, and enjoy sailing, hiking, traveling, and exploring different breweries in my free time!

I am very grateful for everything that RPI and EA have provided me over the years and it was a privilege to speak to the current generation of RPI EAs. I also want to personally congratulate Elizabeth on her retirement and thank her for the immense support she has always provided me! I wouldn't be where I am now without Elizabeth and EA.

OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank you to everyone who has supported our Engineering Ambassadors since day one. We are extremely grateful to all who have played a part in making our work possible over the past year. Here are some of the organizations and companies that have supported our program, collaborated with us, and that RPI Engineering Ambassadors have gone on to work for. We can't wait to see what opportunities the next year brings!

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FEELING GENEROUS?

Simply Call RenXchange at 518-276-6055 and ask to donate to the Engineering Ambassadors fund directly. Engineering ambassadors is always willing to accept donations to help continue bringing the inspiring field of STEM to the youth.

