# Out-of-School Time Stories

## BOOST Grantee Spotlight: **Future Seekers, Inc.**

G·san
GEORGIA STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK

Future Seekers, Inc. provides academic and social enrichment to positively impact Greater Atlanta middle and high school youth. Serving primarily Black youth, Future Seekers works to ensure its students have access to quality academic, technological, and well-being programs. Incorporated in 2003, Future Seekers offers afterschool and summer programming for youth ages 12-17.

The afterschool programs assist students with academics and boost interest in science and technology via tutoring, homework assistance, robotics, field trips, community service, and life skills sessions. Community service projects have included volunteering at a food bank and working in a community garden. **The summer Program lasts six-eight weeks and is designed to teach job readiness**. Teens spend two weeks in job readiness training. They are then placed on job internships two days a week. Teens also participate in college tours, robotics, field trips, civic engagement, dance, art, public speaking, and a showcase event of their learning.



**Youth Served:**
148

**Ages Served:**
6th -12th grade

**Counties Served:**
Fulton & Henry

**Programming Offered:**
Afterschool and Summer

**BOOST Grant Purpose:**
Expand access, Reduce barriers, and Increase quality

**OST Government Funding Sources:**
BOOST grant and Out of School Services program

**Website:**
**www.futureseekers.org**

FUTURE SEEKERS
UNLOCK YOUR MIND AND YOUR FUTURE

To engage youth, in learning, instructors use a range of strategies including platforms like Kahoot and Jeopardy. Students work in teams and compete in games to rekindle positive social interactions. **BOOST grant funds also allowed Future Seekers to expand their STEM-related offerings.** As Evans-Riley, assistant program director notes, "Our middle schoolers were able to produce a game online—to code their own game. And our high schoolers were able to do robot kits."




Under the construction apprenticeship programs, Evans-Riley notes that the students "actually earn while they learn." They can get a journeyman license at the end of the program, but they earn a wage the whole time, along with benefits. This program is offered at no cost to participants, and with Georgia's rapid growth there is ongoing need for people with construction skills.

BOOST funding made possible the development of a program to provide additional tutoring support in English and math to help "bubble" students, those youth who score slightly below grade level, catch up. This assistance is provided directly to the students at school, as is additional assistance to 20-25 students who are in foster care and who also need extra support. As this program has shown success, other schools have reached out to Future Seekers seeking to become additional afterschool sites.

To assess impacts, Future Seekers supplements school and state assessments with surveys of students, parents, and teachers. Impacts so far have been very positive. For example, **97% of youth were making progress toward goals, 88% expressed an increased interest in or appreciation for STEM, and 97% were satisfied with the program.** Staff make ongoing program adjustments based on assessments and feedback. They have liaisons at each school where they offer programs and work closely with school partners to align afterschool curricula with what students are learning during school hours.



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*– Erikkion Evans-Riley*
*Assistant Program Director*

## Engaging Youth and Families

Evans-Riley tells of a student who initially was hesitant about participating. The girl's grandmother said she normally had to be dragged out of bed and did not want to get up for summer school. After two weeks in Future Seekers, the grandmother awoke to discover the granddaughter was up, dressed, had eaten breakfast, and was waiting on her. After school each day, the girl talked at length about her experiences and shared them with friends.

Executive Director Dr. Sandra Hall-Lay emphasizes that Future Seekers believes that as youth progress in their life journey, "there is no heavier burden than an unfulfilled potential." Participants and parents appear to be on the same page.

> **"I would recommend this program to anyone—a very good experience and so much fun," and a peer noted that "this was the best program I have ever been to. I will be back for the robotics class."**
>
> – Future Seekers Participant

> **"My child had a great time and is looking forward to returning. It opened him up from his shyness and talking with peers."**
>
> – Future Seekers Parent



GSAN

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Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) is a competitive grant program administered by the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) and operated in partnership with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). BOOST offers $85 million via three-year grants, renewed annually, with funding made available through the American Rescue Plan. The grants program is aimed at promoting evidence-based practices and whole child supports in afterschool and summer learning programs. BOOST is designed to expand access, reduce barriers to enrollment, and increase programmatic quality to improve outcomes for students and families throughout the state. GSAN provides recommendations for grant awards based on rigorous application criteria and offers technical assistance and training to grantees to ensure successful implementation. All grants are approved by GaDOE, ensuring alignment with statewide priorities and goals.