

Promoting Inclusion and Equity

Dzijeme Ntumi '17, '18G leads new STEAM camp with focus on the Black experience

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This summer, Dzijeme Ntumi '17, '18G served as the lead instructor and curriculum designer for an innovative new educational program that explores science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics, as well as the Black experience.

Offered through [UNH Tech Camp](#), the [Dinah Whipple STEAM Academy](#) was established to stimulate interest in STEM-related subject areas among students of color who are traditionally underrepresented in the field, says Ntumi, who completed both her degrees in civil engineering at UNH and now works as a design engineer for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation.

“This is an important program because in both my personal life and career,” she says, “I have experienced the inequities that exist in the world of STEM and engineering. I don’t look like the typical engineer to most people. I’m usually the only Black woman—often the only Black person—at the table. I can now help change that reality.”

Named after Dinah Whipple, a significant figure in New Hampshire history best known for founding the state’s first school for Black children, the program was offered at no cost to middle and high school students. For its inaugural year, nine students enrolled in the one-week session, which, due to COVID-19, was held mostly online but concluded with an in-person field trip to the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and cruise to learn from marine engineers about the history and use of the harbor. Based on positive feedback from students, parents and staff, the plan is to expand capacity when the program is held on the UNH campus in the future.



Dzijeme Ntumi '17, '18G (front left) led a new STEAM camp focused on the black experience that included a field trip with the campers to the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. She was joined by fellow UNH alumni Hannah Miller '21 (second row, first from left) and Aboubacar Konate '17 (far right).

Her experience with Tech Camp led its founder, professor Bob Henry, to recommend Ntumi to help establish a comparable program in South Africa that [launched in 2017](#). Modeled on UNH Tech Camp, this new program is focused on bringing STEM education to female students from underprivileged areas around Johannesburg. Ntumi’s own experience made her a perfect candidate to launch a STEM program targeting students of color. Born in Ghana and raised in Nashua, she is the daughter of an electrical engineer. In addition to her position as a design engineer in the bridge division

at NH DOT, she also worked at UNH Tech Camp in various capacities for the previous five years.

A presentation on her volunteer work in South Africa brought Ntumi to the attention of Noah Elwood, president of [Appledore Marine Engineering](#) in Portsmouth.

“Noah was inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement and wanted to do something locally to bring more inclusion and equity to the world of STEM,” says Ntumi. “So, he reached out, and we brainstormed ideas.”

From there things moved quickly. The concept for the Dinah Whipple STEAM Academy was hatched, logistics were hammered out with Tech Camp and Ntumi got busy creating a curriculum that would encompass both Black history and a variety of STEM concepts. Appledore was the financial sponsor of the camp.

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