

# Helping Young Inventors Find Their Creative Spark

## Leaders like Michael Morris are inspiring STEM students to dream big

Wednesday, April 12, 2023



TORC EMPLOYEES ASSEMBLE STEM KITS (COURTESY)

Michael Morris has long been an advocate of the software development gig economy. A Granite Stater and tech visionary, he serves as the co-founder and chief executive officer of [Torc](#) — the nearshore intelligent talent network connecting quality remote developers with jobs. Through a vetted, AI-based, on-demand talent sourcing model, Torc is building a community that empowers developers to advance their careers.

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### YIP Joins UNH Leitzel Center

The Young Inventors' Program (YIP) and the University of New Hampshire are excited to announce a new

collaboration that will increase resources and strengthen opportunities for K-12 students in the

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Starting a tech business requires vision and gumption — two traits that Morris is instilling in younger generations by volunteering his time to and securing funding for STEM opportunities.



CEO Michael Morris (courtesy)

“I’m a huge fan of STEM education — it is embedded in the mission of Torc and aligns with our employee’s values — but the real driving factor for me is being the father of four kids, including three girls, and ensuring they all have equal opportunity to explore STEM now and in the future,” he says.

Morris felt that more could be done to increase his children’s STEM exposure and

demonstrate how STEM education has a positive impact on people’s lives. He got involved with their school district, and also became a board member for the Academy of Applied Science and the [Robert H. Rines Young Inventors' Program \(YIP\)](#).

YIP is a K-12 project-based learning curriculum that provides programs, pathways and information to develop the intellectual capacity, critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving abilities of all students so that they may become contributing and forward-thinking members of the STEM and invention communities.

In November 2020, YIP partnered with the University of New Hampshire’s [Joan and James Leitzel Center for Mathematics, Science and Engineering Education](#). By joining the state’s flagship research university ([categorized as R1](#) by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education), YIP now benefits from the Leitzel Center’s direct-service STEM programs

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for K-12 students and statewide interdisciplinary collaborations.

“STEM is the reason why we’re such a progressive country,” says Morris.

“It’s the number one source for innovation globally. STEM is fundamental to so many fields. UNH is an inspiration because it understands the need to attract children to STEM and articulate its impact on society. UNH has a tremendous commitment to the health and growth of communities.”

## **Donating Time and Resources to STEM Education**

Beyond serving on the board of directors for YIP, Morris wanted to find another way to directly give back to local and global education efforts. The result? A STEM kit development initiative that spanned Torc’s worldwide reach. STEM activity kits for students in three locations where Torc has employees were developed and delivered to children. Here in New Hampshire, the [YMCA Allard Center of Goffstown](#) received more than 60 kits, and an orphanage operated by Naya Sawera Ngo in India and a school in Colombia each were delivered kits in person by Torc team members.



Children displaying their backpacks with STEM kits at an orphanage operated by Naya Sawera Ngo in India (courtesy)

Torc employees assembled the kits, which were filled with fun craft supplies for eight STEM activities. Each kit included a personalized note to the young inventor with words of encouragement. Torc employees even decorated the boxes. Morris wrote on his kit, “Be creative” and “Yes you can!”

“We have to provide children with that spark of interest – we want them to love solving a problem, that intellectual, ‘What if I try this? Let’s experiment.’ It’s teaching students how to carry out the scientific method, try new things and learn from mistakes through iteration,” says Morris.

Goffstown YMCA Regional School Age Child Care Director Nicci Webster says that the kits were exciting and fun for the kids to use during program time. “There were clear directions, and they were easy to use! The kids loved the boxes and how different they were; they loved being able to try multiple activities, watch their friends and give friends support. The staff was able to create more boxes based on the ones given to us and they appreciate that

they now have a collection of ideas and STEM activities to use in the future."

## Strategic Partnerships

Before the pandemic, YIP only offered in-person programming. Now, with the help of UNH, projects can be worked on both in-person and remotely through a hybrid model. Morris says this has allowed more children to participate throughout the region. It also allows students to share projects with family members like parents and siblings, which creates a collaborative learning environment and allows students to take pride in their work.

YIP Project Director Tina White says she is honored to have such dedicated support for YIP from community members like Morris and his staff at Torc. "Their desire to engage youth with STEM and future opportunities is admirable," she says.

"They truly live their vision to create a community that connects talented people to build amazing things together. Seeing adults in this role inspires our students and helps them realize that there are so many possibilities within their reach. YIP cannot fulfill our mission to provide pathways and develop forward-thinking leaders in the STEM community without champions like Torc."

As Morris continues to blaze new trails with his company, he remains resolute in helping youth.

"You can build a profitable company, but you can also do meaningful things and be a good steward to the community," he says.

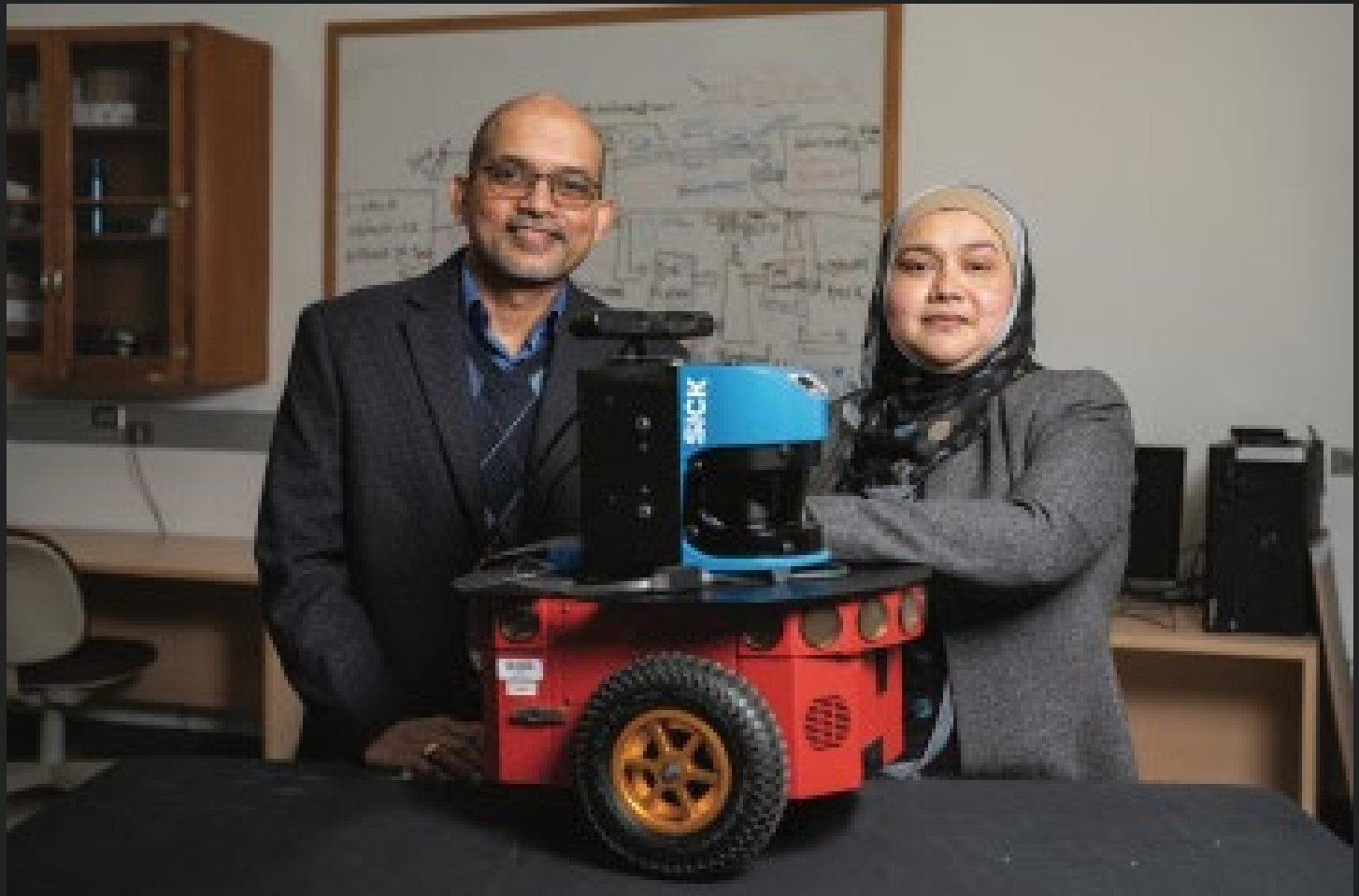
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