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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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New Orleans Black Chorale Annual Christmas Concert

“We Have Heard the Angels Sing”



Chorale members were African prints for the Annual Black History Concert.

By Carol Dotson

The New Orleans Black Chorale grew out of an ensemble that sang with the New Orleans Philharmonic Symphony when it presented the first “Symphony in Black” in 1980, a concert that highlighted the contributions of Black artists to the cultural wealth of New

Orleans. Originally under the direction of the late Edwin B. Hogan, it was comprised of soloists, people from organized church choirs, college choirs, and others with an interest in preserving American Negro Spirituals. The Chorale has sung throughout the region, performing for Pope John Paul’s 1987 visit, for the Christ-

mas Lighting of Canal Street, and its own annual concerts and various music series concerts. Throughout its history, the Chorale has not only given the New Orleans community access to music not usually heard but has also provided scholarships to music students at Xavier, Dillard, and Southern Universities.

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.



"Christmas is my favorite time of year," said Chorale member Kathy Celestine. "I know that it is for a lot of people and it's a time to spread goodwill."



Chorale member Kathy Celestine places NOBC Medallion on 2019 Honoree Damon Smothers, Founder, and CEO of Smother Academy.



The group will perform an assortment of seasonal selections including Ralph Manuel's Alleluia, Andre Thomas' "Rock in Jerusalem," Rogie Clark's "Angels Ring Them Bells" and "The Work of Christmas" by Dan Forrest, based on Howard Thurman's Iconic Poem.

The New Orleans Black Chorale will once again bring beautiful music to the City of New Orleans this Christmas season. The group which will celebrate its 40th Year in the Spring will perform at their Annual Christmas Concert scheduled for Saturday, December 7th

at Trinity Episcopal Church, 1329 Jackson Avenue at 6:30 pm. The theme is "We Have Heard the Angels Sing." The concert is free and open to the public.

"Christmas is my favorite time of year," said Chorale member Kathy Celestine. "I know that it is

for a lot of people and it's a time to spread goodwill. The music the New Orleans Black Chorale performs is what makes it special. The music you'll hear at the Christmas Concert is not your typical Christmas Carols that people always sing. Of course, we do those, but we take it to another level, and it is definitely an experience that shouldn't be missed."

The group will perform an assortment of seasonal selections including Ralph Manuel's Alleluia, Andre Thomas' "Rock in Jerusalem," Rogie Clark's

"Angels Ring Them Bells" and "The Work of Christmas" by Dan Forrest, based on Howard Thurman's Iconic Poem.

The Chorale is mourning the recent loss of longtime President Harold Boucree. Boucree served as president of the chorale for many years and was also the unofficial historian of the group. He will be recognized at the Christmas Concert and at the Black History Concert.

The Conductor and Musical Director is John E. Ware -D.M.A. he is a Professor of Music at Xavier University where he teaches

Voice, Conducting, Vocal Diction and Pedagogy, and is the Conductor of the Xavier Concert Choir and University Chorus. He is passionate about keeping the American Negro Spiritual alive.

"The New Orleans Black Chorale has had a tradition of sharing Christmas with the community through song and reminding everyone of the meaning of Christmas. Our theme this year focuses on the carols and songs that tell the story from the Angel's. Whether African American or European, each selection has mention of the angels," says Ware.

New Orleans Black Chorale 2019-2020 Christmas Concert – "We Have Heard the Angels Sing"

Saturday, December 7th
Trinity Episcopal Church
6:30 pm
1329 Jackson Ave.
FREE

Black History Concert
Sunday, March 8th
5:00 pm
Xavier University's Administration Auditorium
FREE

Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra
Wednesday, March 11th
7:30 pm
By admission

**Christ Church Third Sunday Series –
Covington**
Sunday, March 15, 2020
5:00 pm
Christ Episcopal Church
120 New Hampshire St., Covington
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For more information visit
www.neworleansblackchorale.com



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Denise, adopted 17-year-old Amina



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Celebrating “SaintsGiving”

The Black and Gold Clinch NFC South for 3rd Straight Season

E. Benjamin
Data News Weekly
Contributor

It was a “SaintsGiving” Spectacular as the New Orleans Saints clinched the NFC South winning the Division Title for the third straight year beating their bitter rivals the Atlanta Falcons by a score of 26-18.

The teams Swiss Army Knife and Jack-of-All-Trades Taysom Hill got things going early blocking a punt to set up his 3-yard touchdown catch. Then later he scored on a 30-yard run. This was truly his night as he along with the Saints shined, barring and giving the Falcons three consecutive on-side kick recoveries.

The Saints defense showed up in this game with nine sacks including during a crucial time as the clock



New Orleans Saints Jack-Of-All-Trades Taysom Hill is getting it done in many different ways contributing to the team. He could be the X-Factor that may help them get to this year's Super Bowl. (Photo Credit: John Amis Associated Press)

ticked down and Atlanta driving to attempt to tie the game.

All-Pro Cameron Jordan, who had 4 sacks on the day, put the nail in the coffin sacking Matt Ryan on a fourth-down play from the New Orleans 44 with 38 seconds remaining.

The Saints (10-2) and preparing for what is perhaps the biggest game of their season where they will face the (10-2) San Francisco 49ers; a contest that could determine who will be the number one seed with home-field advantage throughout the playoffs.

The game is on Sunday, December 8th at the New Orleans Superdome. The Who Dat Nation will be there in the Dome and all the Black and Gold fans from across the nation will be cheering them on to what is hopefully a victory.

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Mayor Cantrell Releases Statement on Public Safety Readiness, Canal Street Shooting Investigation

City of New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS (12/2/19) — Mayor LaToya Cantrell today released the following statement regarding the City's public safety preparedness and the ongoing investigation into the Canal Street shooting incident:

“The outbreak of gun violence early this Sunday was an ugly aberration and a tragedy for the innocent victims impacted, but it was also a stark reminder of the preparedness and the responsiveness of our public safety teams,” said Mayor Cantrell. “Our NOPD officers worked seamlessly with partners from the Louisiana State Police, the FBI, the DEA and the ATF to respond immediately and effectively. Our close collaboration with local, state and federal agencies is a critical asset in such a crisis, and we are grateful for their friendship and ready assistance.”

“As we look ahead to a busy winter season full of major sporting events welcoming visitors from across the world, and to a bright future as a destination city for sports, entertainment and tourism — we



New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell with Police Superintendent Shaun Ferguson. (File Photo)

stand proudly behind the men and women of our law enforcement agencies, and we stand together with a strong network of partners all committed to keeping New Orleans safe.

“In the last two days, my fellow elected leaders on every level have reached out to express their support and commitment — including Gov. John Bel Edwards, and Senator John Kennedy. Every one of us is dedicated to putting every available resource behind protecting this City, her people

and our visitors. We will continue to build on the tremendous success the NOPD and our partners have achieved in reducing gun violence and safeguarding our major events. We stand ready for a safe and successful season ahead, and we will continue to prove every day that no force in the world can match the NOPD and our partner agencies when it comes to making events in our City — from big nights at the Superdome to second lines in our neighborhoods — safe and successful.”

Mayor Cantrell joins St. Augustine Catholic Church in Announcement of \$2.5 Million Campaign to Save America's Oldest Black Catholic Church



Saint Augustine was built in 1841 to serve a diverse community. Early worshipers included Free People of Color, slaves, Creoles, Haitians, French, Spanish, and Germans. Today, it continues to welcome parishioners of every walk of life, including non-Catholics and visitors from across the globe.

Data News Weekly Staff Edited Report

NEW ORLEANS - America's oldest Black Catholic Church is in need of your help. On December 1, 2019, Mayor LaToya Cantrell in partnership with Saint Augustine Catholic Church which is located in New Orleans' Historic Tremé Neighborhood announced a \$2.5 million dollar restoration campaign to save this important church. They also announced that they have raised over half of this total through generous private donations.

The announcement included local dignitaries, and took place within St. Augustine Catholic Church, following the 10 AM mass, at 1211 Governor Nicholls Street.

About St. Augustine Church

Saint Augustine Catholic Church is recognized by the Smithsonian's African American Museum in Washington D.C. as America's oldest Black Catholic Church. The church is a bastion of New Orleans culture, jazz music, and has served as a center for spiritual guidance for the Tremé for nearly 180 years. Today, years of weather, wear and tear threaten this historical sacred place.

Saint Augustine was built in 1841 to serve a diverse community. Early worshipers included Free People

of Color, slaves, Creoles, Haitians, French, Spanish, and Germans. Today, it continues to welcome parishioners of every walk of life, including non-Catholics and visitors from across the globe.


Visitors are drawn to Saint Augustine to witness history and to enjoy St. Augustine's famous gospel choir, when they do, they stand where New Orleans' musical greats and many of America's most prominent civil rights leaders have also stood.

Saint Augustine Church has been an integral part of the development of Tremé and shares in its history of being core to New Orleans' culture. Henriette Delille a free woman of color and founder of the first African American order of nuns; the Sisters of the Holy Family, took her vows at the altar of St. Augustine.


Through her service at St. Augustine she became a mother to the community starting the first school for slave children and adults and a home for aged people of color. She is now venerable (awaiting sainthood) and could be the first African American Saint.

TO DONATE: Please visit <https://staugchurch.org/>



Mayor Cantrell joins St. Augustine Catholic Church in Announcement of \$2.5 Million Campaign to Save America's Oldest Black Catholic Church



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Red Carpet “Downtown Injun Culture” Film Premiere

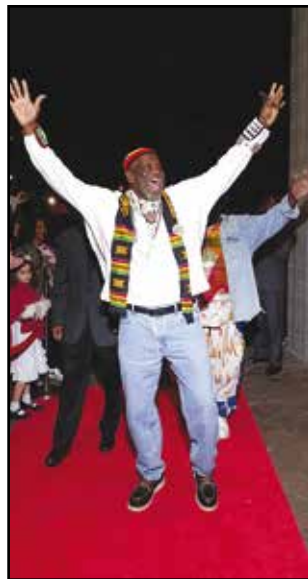
Photos by Glenn Summers

The community came to what was a truly amazing event. The premiere of the highly anticipated documentary “Downtown Injun Culture”. The evening was epic as the receptive audience watched a film that explored the Downtown Black Masking Culture.

In the audience were members of the Black Masking community, some who were featured in the film included. Big Chief David Peters Montana and Big Queen Ausetua Amor Amenkum of Washitaw Nation. Big Chief Shaka Zulu, Golden Feathers Hunters, Big Chief Victor Fi Yi Yi Harris, Mandingo Warriors and Big Chief Pie Tyrone Stevenson of the Monogram Hunters.

Also on hand was Kevin Cheveyo Turner, Big Chief Al Womble and wife Big Queen Wanda Womble of the Cheyenne Tribe Alphonse “Dowee” Robair Black Hatchet Tribe and Big Chief Daryl Montana of the world-renowned Yellow Pocahontas.

The Executive Producer of the project Glenn Chayil Jones would like to thank all those who came out to support the film and those cultural pillars, who continue the rich tradition of Black Masking.



Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events

Bayou Classic

By Ed Benjamin

The 46th Annual Bayou Classic was again a success. It was an amazing weekend celebrating Black Excellence and Data News Weekly was there!!!



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Africa's the Future

Why Akon Says that African Americans should Invest in the Continent

Felice Leon
Contributor, theRoot.com

When you combine African Americans and diaspora Africans, that unity itself is what's gonna make Wakanda actually possible."
—Akon

After his single "Locked Up," Akon was determined not to be your run-of-the-mill one-hit-wonder.

The artist and producer had some foresight, understanding that the shelf life of an artist in a super-fickled entertainment industry is fleeting. So in the early 2000s, the Senegalese-American



Akon

rapper decided to invest in Africa.

Today, the 46-year-old has his hand in a bevy of investments—notably, his energy company, Akon Lighting Africa; the Akonik Label Group and his forthcoming crypto city—powered by the businessman's very own cryptocurrency, the Akoin. We call this a light flex.

So, it might be fair to say that Akon is giving T'Challa a run for his money. What do y'all think?

"Africa's economic potential, I think, is to the roof. I think Africa is not only the future, but it has been the past for everybody," Akon told The Root.

Book Review

'The Christians' features a 1960s Louisiana Love Story

Cora Lester
The Drum Newspaper

The Christians, book one, follows the life and love of Mary Jean Woods, a young, Christian woman in 1960 South Louisiana as she maneuvers through self-discovery, unrighteousness, and betrayal in hopes to find a true spiritual identity.

Through this first release, B.J.T. Ledet weaves a story that answers "What exemplifies a Christian?" and introduce readers to characters who boldly feel right—even all-knowing—in their beliefs when they are flawed and some are fallen.

The Christians deals with the distinctive differences and interactions between the characters who consider themselves Christians and those who don't. Meet ministers who are in the business of religion instead of uplifting the people and teaching them to love. Meet the 'show and tell' flock alongside the church Mothers who have tunnel



vision and live in the past.

Using romance, family scandals, and murder, the novel questions who is and is not a Christian and how the interactions between family and friends impact the spiritual growth of young adults. B.J.T. Ledet is a retired Hurricane Katrina survivor who worked at Tulane University in New Orleans. She attended Southern University and A&M College and Tulane University. Cur-

rently, she gives back to the community by tutoring kids inside her home while working on completing the trilogy. Ledet enjoys writing from her Baton Rouge home where she lives with her spouse, a dog, and a cat.

Published by Jozef Syndicate, The Christians (ISBN 978-1944155209) is available on Amazon and at www.jozefsyndicate.com/creators/b-j-t-ledet/.



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Obesity Among Black Women Outrageously High

Part 2

Embracing Their Curves...Positive Body Image and Self Esteem

Darcie Ortique
NNPA/OW Contributor

Cultural standards and barriers
Some will argue that there are a number of cultural barriers (fashionability, family responsibilities, stressful lifestyle) that may also challenge or prevent many African American women from exercising regularly.

United States Surgeon General Regina Benjamin stated in an interview for the Chicago Tribune, "Of-tentimes you get women saying, 'I can't exercise today because of my hair or get my air wet.'" For some, there's a trade-off between preserving heat-required hairstyles and physical fitness and research suggests that misplaced vanity is at the root of the problem.

To the contrary, African American men and the media have also supported plus-size and curvy women, which have made many overweight African American women feel comfortable in their skin.

The Washington Post and the Kaiser Family Foundation conducted a poll to get the perspective directly from the source. According to The Washington Post, the poll revealed that "although Black women are [generally] heavier than their White counterparts, they report having appreciably higher levels of self-esteem. That figure was 66 percent among Black women considered by government standards overweight or obese."



Award winning artist Lizzo celebrates and inspires women to embrace their curves as beautiful.

Research like this also suggests that, as a culture, the majority of African American women see no harm in being too vain to take accountability for their health. The 1992 hit, 'Baby Got Back,' by Sir Mix-a-Lot, highlighted the fact that many Black men embrace full-figured black women, despite contrary beliefs:

"I want em' real thick and juicy so find that juicy double Mix-a-Lot's in trouble," The old-school rapper went on to say, "So Cosmo says you're fat, Well I ain't down with that 'Cause your waist is small and your curves are kickin'."



According to The Washington Post, the poll revealed that "although Black women are [generally] heavier than their White counterparts, they report having appreciably higher levels of self-esteem."

'Baby Got Back'

Songs like this and others inspired Black women to love the skin they're in and to be proud of their "thickness" because men appreciate rolls, curves and big bottoms.

For years, many R&B, Hip Hop

& Rap musicians have type-casted the women they have in their music videos. And more often than not, the video vixens usually have a small waist, thick hips, thighs, and a big butt. Black women who aren't "thick" or "curvy" are going to great measures to achieve this look.

The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery reports that 'cosmetic augmentation among Black people increased 56 percent between 2005 and 2013 and is still rising."

Richard White, M.D. physician, specializing in internal medicine and research at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Fla., has studied the correlation between health literacy and the effect it has on chronic health disease and obesity in underserved communities. "It's really going to require the African-American community to come together as a unit to really say, 'you know what? this is our health as a community, this is something that we're going to take the initiative and interest to improve ourselves and not necessarily rely on outside or external forces to try and make it happen for us,'" White said. He encourages his African American patients to take a personal inventory of their lives and take accountability for the foods they are consuming and the decisions they make regarding physical activity.

Data News Weekly Editorial Team Contributed to this Report

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Coco Gauff Visits the Big Easy!

Open practice for the 15 year-old Tennis Phenom



Members of the public attended and later spoke to and took photos with Gauff.

Data News Weekly Staff
Edited Report
Photos by Shawn Colin

(New Orleans, LA) – Coco Gauff, the young, record-breaking tennis star, came to New Orleans and hosted an open practice on Wednesday, November 27, 2019, at City Park Pepsi Center from 11 am-1 pm. Members of the public attended and later spoke to and took photos with Gauff.

About Coco Gauff:

Cori “Coco” Gauff is a Professional American Tennis Player and is ranked #68 in the world. She made history this past year at Wimbledon, where she became the youngest female to qualify in the main draw at the age of fifteen, defeated her idol, Venus Williams, and advanced to the fourth round.

In addition, Coco made history as a junior player by becoming the youngest #1 ranked ITF

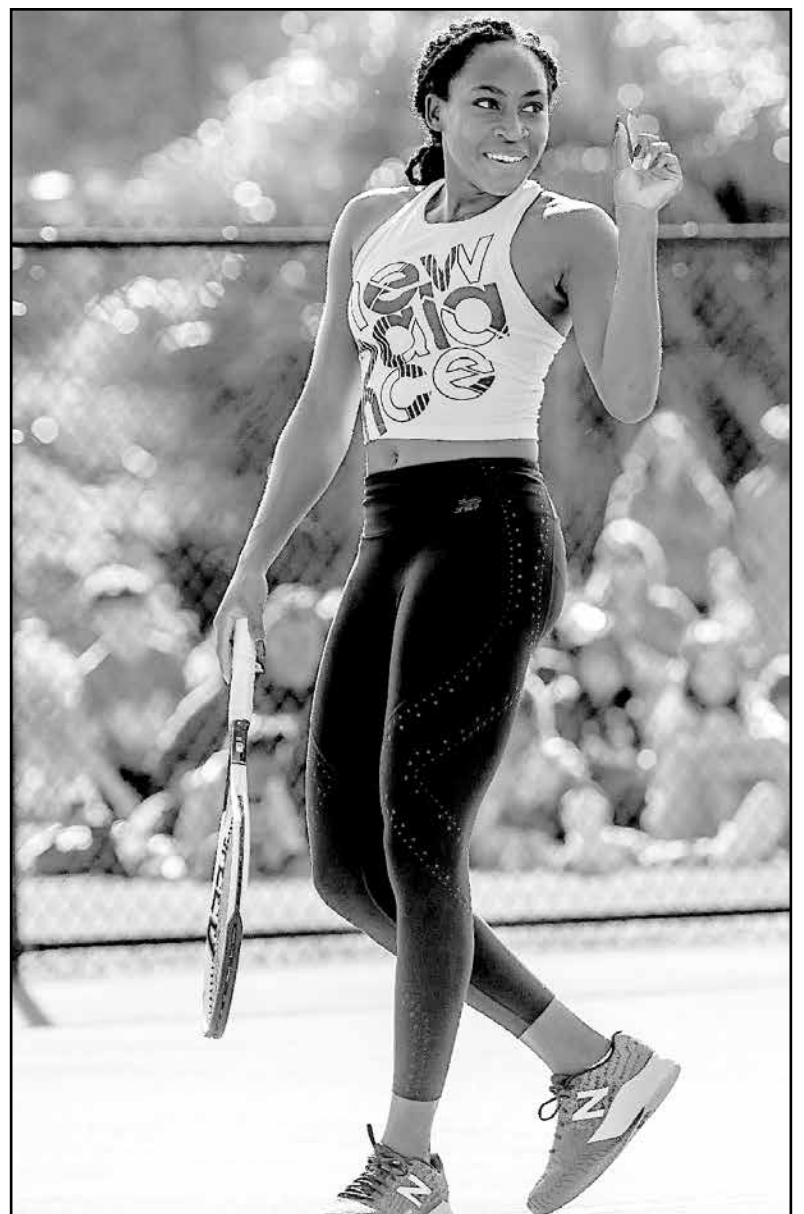
player in the history of rankings and has won several international junior titles: 2018 French Open Champion, 2018 Orange Bowl Girls 18 Champion.

Coco won her first WTA title in Linz, Austria at the age of fifteen and currently holds 1 singles and 2 doubles titles.

Coco’s goal is to one day be recognized as the GOAT (Greatest of All Time) of tennis – her motto is to dream BIG.



Coco made history as a junior player by becoming the youngest #1 ranked ITF player in the history of rankings and has won several international junior titles:



Cori “Coco” Gauff is a Professional American Tennis Player and is ranked #68 in the world .



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Civil Rights Icon Rosa Parks Honored with Statue in Montgomery, Alabama



The Rosa Parks statue in downtown Montgomery, Ala., on Sunday evening, December 1, 2019. Mickey Welsh / Advertiser



Rosa Parks on December 1, 1955 defying the segregation laws. Her arrest was the beginning of the Montgomery Bus Boycott during the Civil Rights Movement.

Data News Weekly Staff Edited Report

An Icon that spawned a movement Rosa Parks was memorialized in the city where she was once arrested for refusing to give up her

seat to a White person ... and where a statue of her now stands tall.

The bronze life-size figure was unveiled Sunday in Montgomery, Alabama with the help of Mayor Steven Reed – who recently became Montgomery's first Black Mayor – as well



Mary Louise Smith, from left, Governor Kay Ivey, Civil Rights Attorney Fred Gray and Montgomery Mayor Steven Reed pose after the unveiling of the Rosa Parks statue in downtown Montgomery, Ala., on Sunday, December 1, 2019. Mickey Welsh / Advertiser

as Alabama's Governor, Kay Ivey.

Knowing we are in times that are historical, it is important to give background to this and other courageous people who put their lives on the line for the right to pursue the American Dream and to live with freedom, dignity, and equality.

On Dec. 1, 1955 ... Rosa Parks refused to follow a city bus driver's order to surrender her seat – which was already in the “colored section” – to a White passenger because the front part of the bus was already full. She stood her ground and got taken to jail for it.

Her refusal and the subsequent arrest sparked the Montgomery bus boycotts, which lasted for a whopping 381 days ... and severely hurt the transit companies' bottom line. The city eventually changed its segregation bus law once SCOTUS weighed in the following year.

On this special day, there were other important people there too, that included Mary Louise Smith. She is notable for having been arrested in October 1955 at the age of 18 in Montgomery, Alabama for

refusing to give up her seat on the segregated bus system. She is one of several women who were arrested for this offense prior to Rosa Parks that year.

Also, she was one of five women named as plaintiffs in the Federal Civil Suit, *Browder v. Gayle*, challenging the constitutionality of the state and local bus segregation laws that were eventually overturned and ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1956 under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

On hand during the unveiling was Civil Rights Attorney Fred Gray, who worked on many of the Civil Rights cases in Alabama. He worked with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Thurgood Marshall during this time of social revolution in America.

This is the Second Annual Rosa Parks Day in Alabama after the State Legislature approved a measure to make it a state holiday in 2018. Alabama is one of several states that have a day that honors the Civil Rights Icon.

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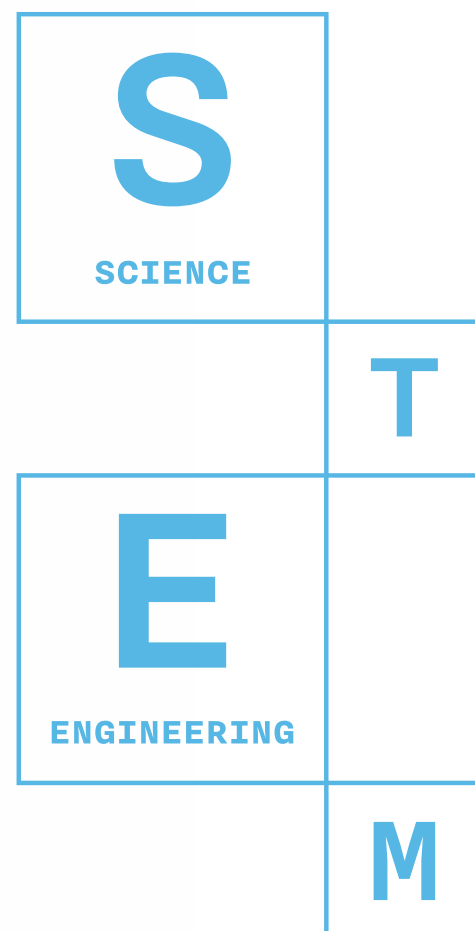
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