



**Sister to Sister International, Inc.**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.....***

January 30, 2023

### **Sister to Sister International Partners with UKG to Host Pilot Mentoring Circles!**

**Yonkers, NY:** On January 19<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 PM, students’ videos turned on and their audio connected to a Zoom session with a panel of professional women of color waiting for them. These students, known as STEAM Sistahs, were taking part in a pilot mentoring program called *Mentoring Circles w/ UKG*, a joint project by Sister to Sister International, Inc. and [UKG](#), a leading provider of HR, payroll, and workforce management solutions for all people and the first corporate participant to engage in programming of this kind.

This mentorship program is facilitated through Sister to Sister International’s STEAM Program and fully funded by the [UKG Close the Gap Initiative](#) — a multiyear, multimillion-dollar commitment by UKG aimed at promoting equity of compensation and equity of opportunity for all — through a contribution distributed by Grantmakers for Girls of Color. The STEAM Program strives to expose Black and Brown girls and girls of color to opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (also known as STEAM) and to encourage not only their participation, but their success in the various fields within STEAM. In line with Sister to Sister International’s holistic approach to co-curricular enrichment that emphasizes practical skills training alongside academic excellence, these select few STEAM Sistahs were invited to hear from, talk with, and pursue one-on-one mentoring with professional Black women and women of color from UKG, including members of BUILD (Black U Krewers in Leadership and Development), one of the software company’s largest and most active employee resource groups (ERGs) fostering inclusion and advancement for Black employees at all career levels as well as allyship.

Cheryl Brannan, the founder of Sister to Sister International, stated, “We are grateful to UKG and Grantmakers for Girls of Color for this opportunity to have a cohort of our girls participate in a mentoring pilot with professionals that can have a tremendous impact on their interest and overall trajectory. Sister to Sister International is also pleased about our alignment with UKG’s efforts to advance pay equity.”

Meeting once a month from October 2022 to March 2023, this pilot program strives to provide career evaluation support, upskills training, group mentoring, and one-on-one mentoring with volunteer UKG panelists and

facilitators to provide a variety of perspectives and experiences for the students to learn from and engage with each session.

“Although I believe talent is distributed equitably, opportunity is not,” said Brian K. Reaves, EVP and chief belonging, diversity, and equity officer at UKG. “Sister to Sister International is doing incredible work to maximize opportunity through STEAM education and mentorship — work that aligns with our own people-driven purpose at UKG to pave the way forward for future generations by helping companies foster an ecosystem of equity: equity of representation, opportunity, compensation, and wellbeing. By partnering with Sister to Sister International and other organizations committed to building a diverse and inclusive future, UKG is taking meaningful steps to support the aspirations of many and end the decades-long fight for equity for all.”

Jhinelle Walker, the Sister to Sister International program consultant, said, "Our students are really benefiting from interacting with the UKG women from various professional backgrounds. The presentations have been excellent and the breakout sessions have given our students the opportunity to ask questions in an informal environment. They have particularly enjoyed learning about resume writing and the exposure to STEAM careers."

Some of the topics presented include breaking into a STEAM field, resume writing, business etiquette and communication, and responsible social media use. Classes and co-curricular programs teach students to succeed in their studies, and programs like this are essential in teaching them how to succeed in their chosen careers.

“Our multifaceted partnership with Sister to Sister International has flourished because of the people involved in building the mentoring program,” said Heather Geronemus, senior director of social equity, opportunity, and impact at UKG, which committed to funding a number of critical programs, nonprofits, and education in support of equitable pay and equitable opportunity for all through the company’s *Close the Gap* initiative. “By organizing to support these young women on their STEAM journeys, our BUILD ERG members have gained just as much, if not more, than the participants. There’s something very inspiring about sharing your talents and your experiences with others, and for that, we appreciate the opportunity that Sister to Sister International has given *us*.”

### **About Sister to Sister International, Inc. (STSI)**

Sister to Sister International, Inc. (STSI) is a nonprofit non-governmental organization founded in 1994 whose mission is to motivate, educate, train and advocate for the advancement of Black women and girls in Westchester County and beyond. STSI produced a first ever research report entitled the Status of Black Women & Girls in Westchester County that focuses on STEM & STEAM Education; Health & Wellness (Black Maternal Health); Juvenile and Social Justice; Entrepreneurship, Pay Equity & Economic Prosperity, including the creation of our Black Business Directory; Go to [S2si.org](http://S2si.org) to see our website and to learn more about other STSI initiatives as well as membership and partnership opportunities.