Partner Profile: Full S.T.E.A.M. Ahead

Joi'a Austin, Founder and Program Director

Joi'a Austin is an educator and a 2007 graduate of the Alabama School of Mathematics and Science. She began by teaching hands-on STEM classes and workshops at centers and schools, then started offering free Literacy and STEM classes at her local library so every family could attend regardless of income. As demand grew, she formed Full STEAM Ahead to close the gaps she saw in educational access, and she has led it for years with a deep passion for shaping young minds.



Serving PreK–12 Across Montgomery

Full STEAM Ahead is a community-based nonprofit in Montgomery that closes educational gaps through hands-on literacy and STEAM enrichment. Its programs include monthly Literacy and STEM Saturdays, Brown Girls Wear White Coats medical and dental labs, the Brotherhood Labs, Teen Lab, Leaders Who Read and an ACT/SAT Prep Series, all built on mentorship and culturally responsive learning.

FSA Mission

Full STEAM Ahead exists to close educational gaps by providing hands-on literacy and STEAM enrichment for children and youth. Through culturally responsive learning and mentorship, FSA builds confidence, curiosity and a lifelong love of learning, working toward a future where all students have equitable access to enriching experiences that support the whole child.

Target Demographics

Children and youth in grades PreK–12 across Montgomery, with a focus on underserved communities and families for whom cost has been a barrier to enrichment.

Core Pillars

Literacy and STEM Saturdays

Monthly hands-on sessions where reading and science come alive together, free and open to families.

Brown Girls Wear White Coats

Immersive labs where girls check vital signs, explore tooth anatomy and learn alongside practicing medical and dental professionals.

Teen Leadership and College Readiness

Teen Lab, the Brotherhood Labs and an ACT/SAT Prep Series that build leaders and open doors to college.

What Drives FSA

Access: Free and low-cost programs so income never decides who gets to learn.

Hands-On: Experiential instruction students remember.

Representation: Mentors and professionals students can see themselves in.

Partnership: Working alongside libraries and community groups.

Whole Child: Literacy, STEAM, leadership and confidence growing together.

How You Can Help

Your support helps FSA reach more Montgomery students with programs they remember. Gifts fund books and materials, stipends for facilitators and mentors, Saturday labs, and trips like Camp McDowell for 7th and 8th graders. FSA designs, staffs and runs every program. Mattison Hall Group supports FSA behind the scenes with grant administration, allowable-cost guidance, data collection, ALSDE reporting and close-out, plus an ACT Prep Series delivered through GOAT Tutors and logistics for the Camp McDowell trip.





