

Summer 2026

THE TALCOTT CONTINUUM

WHERE STEM EDUCATION, RESEARCH, & OUTREACH COME TOGETHER



TALCOTT MOUNTAIN

SCIENCE CENTER • ACADEMY • RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Building the Future, Together



As the lush green of early summer blankets Talcott Mountain and we head into the warmth of July, it provides a wonderful vantage point to look back on a season of incredible activity and growth on the ridge. This spring has been a whirlwind of milestone achievements, and as I reflect on the months behind us, my heart is filled with profound gratitude for the remarkable community that anchors everything we do.

Nowhere was the strength of our community more visible than at our recent Talcott Together event. I am deeply humbled to share that, through your collective generosity, we raised over \$100,000 to support our small but mighty institution and its pioneering STEM mission. Beyond the incredible financial support, the true highlight of the evening was a fantastic alumni panel. Hearing our former students speak so eloquently about how Talcott shaped their paths was a moving reminder of the long-term impact of our work, and a testament to the lasting bonds that connect the Talcott family across generations.

Talcott alumni at Talcott Together 2026



As we celebrate the conclusion of another successful school year, we have so much to applaud. Our hallways, labs, and classrooms have been filled with student excellence, rigorous inquiry, and a vibrant sense of discovery. Our community has proven remarkably resilient and strong—a sentiment that was formally validated recently as we officially received our CAIS accreditation. This milestone is a hard-earned achievement that reflects the profound dedication of our faculty, the commitment of our staff, and the high standards of our institution.

Even as we cross the finish line of the academic year, we are actively looking ahead to what's next for Talcott. We are thrilled to report growing enrollment for the upcoming school year, a clear indicator that our unique educational environment continues to inspire advanced and curious learners. Additionally, building on the update shared in our winter newsletter regarding our search for the next permanent Academy leader, our search committee has successfully concluded its work. While we are putting the final touches on the transition details, please keep an eye on your inbox shortly after this newsletter is released for a formal, public announcement introducing the new leader who will guide the Academy into its next exciting chapter this summer.

Whether you are an alumnus looking back on the impact of your time on the mountain, a current family sharing in your child's daily breakthroughs, or a dedicated supporter investing in the future of STEM innovation, you play a vital role in our success. Thank you for your ongoing support, your generosity, and your belief in our vision.

Gratefully,



Jeff Martin, Executive Director



Talcott Together 2026 Raises Over \$100,000

On Friday, May 29, members of the Talcott community gathered at the Farmington Polo Club for Talcott Together 2026, an evening dedicated to celebrating the people, experiences, and opportunities that make Talcott extraordinary.

We are grateful to share that, thanks to the generosity of our attendees, sponsors, donors, volunteers, and supporters, the event raised more than \$100,000 in combined support of The Talcott Fund and the Talcott Brick Campaign.

These funds will help sustain and strengthen the educational experiences that have defined Talcott for generations, supporting hands-on STEM learning, innovative programs, faculty excellence, student opportunities, and the continued growth of our institution.

One of the highlights of the evening was the alumni panel, Where Curiosity Leads: An Alumni Conversation on the Future of STEM, moderated by Dr. Jay White, Director of the Talcott Mountain Research Institute. The panel featured Dr. Stephen Fantone (TMSC alumnus), Dr. Courtney Ackeifi (TMA '02, TMSC alumna), Bryce Adelstein Lelbach (TMA '05), and Yveson Hsiao (TMA '24). Their reflections on how Talcott shaped their intellectual curiosity, confidence, and career paths served as a powerful reminder that the impact of a Talcott education extends far beyond the classroom and continues long after graduation.

We were also honored to present the 2026 Young Alumni Innovator Award to Bryce Adelstein Lelbach (TMA '05). Presented annually at Talcott Together, the award recognizes emerging Talcott alumni who have demonstrated exceptional achievement, leadership, and innovation in their profession. Bryce, who is a Principal Software Engineer at NVIDIA, exemplifies the creativity, curiosity, and spirit of innovation that Talcott strives to cultivate in every student.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Talcott Together would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors. We extend our heartfelt thanks to:

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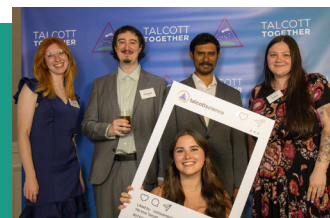
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As we reflect on this year's celebration, we are filled with gratitude for the strength and generosity of the Talcott community. We are already looking forward to Talcott Together 2027 and to gathering once again to celebrate the connections, discoveries, and spirit of innovation that define Talcott. Thank you for being an important part of our story.

The Last Place I Learned Anything: Bryce Adelstein Lelbach's Talcott Journey



Bryce Adelstein Lelbach did not have a computer at home until he was 12 years old. Today, he is a Principal Software Engineer at NVIDIA and the recipient of Talcott Mountain Science Center, Academy, & Research Institute's 2026 Young Alumni Innovator Award. For Bryce, the recognition is especially meaningful because Talcott was one of the few academic spaces where he felt encouraged to explore his interests.

"I'm of course honored. Talcott's always had a very special place in my heart," Bryce says. "It's very nice to be appreciated, especially as somebody who did not have a good experience with the educational system in general. I was a college dropout. I was not a very good student in high school and college. So it's nice to be honored by the one academic institution that I have always had good feelings about."

Bryce's connection to Talcott began long before he enrolled in the Academy. He spent years attending Talcott's summer programs before becoming an Academy student and graduating in 2005. Later, while in high school, he returned to the mountain as a summer program counselor. When he looks back on those years, Bryce does not remember the grades or assignments. Instead, he remembers learning how to ask questions.

"Talcott's the last place in traditional schooling where I learned anything," Bryce shares. "What I learned from Talcott was how to learn, how to be a scientist, some of the basics of curiosity, the scientific methodology, and just the idea of exploration, of tackling hard, open questions."

At Talcott, Bryce attended lectures, interacted with scientists, and explored ideas that interested him. He was encouraged to see himself not just as a student learning about science, but as someone capable of contributing to it. His time at Talcott also gave him something else: the confidence to believe he belonged in those spaces.

"I learned this confidence from being at Talcott, this confidence of being in the room with the notable leaders of any particular field," he says. "When I was at Talcott, we would go to the On the Shoulders of

Giants lectures, and we'd have all these prominent scientists and people come in. That normalized being in the room with leaders for me."

After graduating from the Academy, Bryce followed a path that looked different from many of his peers. He left college during his freshman year and immersed himself in the world of open-source software, collaborating with developers from around the globe. This journey shaped his technical expertise and reinforced his belief in the value of community in personal and professional growth.

"When I was at Talcott, I felt respected by the teachers almost as a peer," Bryce says. "I felt that I too could do science, could conduct an experiment, could maybe even teach the teachers something. That's a very rare thing in our educational system."

Today, Bryce's work focuses on programming languages and models. As a Principal Software Engineer at NVIDIA, he designs the programming languages and frameworks other engineers use to write software. He is particularly interested in how artificial intelligence (AI) is causing a new industrial revolution, changing the way people learn, create, and solve problems.

"With the advent of Agentic AI, the entire software engineering ecosystem is undergoing a radical change," he says. "The way that we work and develop software is completely different now than it was five years ago—and it will be even more different in a couple of years from now. It's a very interesting time for someone in the field that I'm in."

As Bryce notes, we're living in an interesting time for science. He reflects on how science and technology have changed over the last several decades. With scientific exploration increasingly being done on a laptop instead of in a lab, students have more opportunities than ever before to contribute to the fields that interest them.

"I think a lot of the barriers to entry, to being involved and participating in science, are lower than they used to be," Bryce says. "If you look at the 1970s and the 1980s, if you wanted to make a meaningful contribution to most scientific fields or to technology, you needed access to facilities and equipment that now everybody has access to."

More than twenty years after graduating from Talcott, Bryce still sees curiosity as one of the most valuable skills a student can develop. He encourages current Talcott students to start contributing to the fields that interest them now rather than waiting until they have a degree or job title.

"Don't wait until the end of your educational career to start contributing to the fields that you think you want to build your career in," Bryce says. "When you're a high school student, a college student, or even a student at Talcott, you might be able to meaningfully contribute to the scientific and technology literature out there, to the base of knowledge out there. You're never too young to start thinking about how you can make a meaningful contribution."



Congratulations to Bryce Adelstein Lelbach (TMA '05), recipient of Talcott Mountain Science Center, Academy, & Research Institute's 2026 Young Alumni Innovator Award. We are proud to celebrate his accomplishments and the impact he continues to make in the world of STEM.

Talcott Mountain Research Institute Hosts Inaugural On the Shoulders of Giants Lecture Featuring Dr. Eric Fossum

On Tuesday, May 13, 2026, the Talcott Mountain Science Center, Academy, & Research Institute welcomed students, families, educators, STEM professionals, and community members for the inaugural “On the Shoulders of Giants” (OSG) Lecture hosted by the Talcott Mountain Research Institute.

The evening featured an inspiring presentation “Here’s Looking at You: The Invention Behind the Camera in Your Pocket,” from Dr. Eric R. Fossum, inventor of the CMOS (complementary metal-oxide semiconductor) active pixel sensor camera-on-a-chip technology now used in billions of devices worldwide, including smartphone cameras, webcams, medical imaging systems, and more.

A Connecticut native and Talcott Mountain Science Center alumnus, Dr. Fossum shared insights into his groundbreaking work, his career journey, and the process of scientific discovery with an audience of curious learners from across the region. Attendees ranged in age from 8 to 80 years old, representing every level of STEM interest and experience. Some attendees even traveled from as far as 1.5 hours away to take part in the event.

Hosted by the Talcott Mountain Research Institute, the OSG Lecture Series invites the intellectually curious public into thoughtful conversations with leading STEM scholars and creative thinkers whose work shapes our understanding of the natural world. Each lecture explores not only scientific discoveries, but also the human curiosity and inquiry that drive innovation forward.

Talcott extends its gratitude to everyone who attended and helped make the inaugural OSG Lecture a success, and a special thank you to Dr. Fossum for sharing his incredible expertise and inspiring the Talcott community.



LEARN MORE

To learn more about upcoming “On the Shoulders of Giants” Lectures and future events, visit talcottscience.org/osg-lectures/

Congratulations, Dean Raptis: TMA 2026 Graduate

This year, Talcott Mountain Academy (TMA) proudly celebrates graduate Dean Raptis. Since joining TMA as a sixth grader, Dean has embraced the Academy's spirit of curiosity and exploration, pursuing interests across a remarkable range of disciplines. Throughout his time at Talcott, he has earned numerous honors through History Day, science fairs, and arts and writing competitions, while also sharing his knowledge with others, including stepping into the role of guest lecturer during a Pre-Algebra class earlier this year.

As Dean shares, "Looking at my time at Talcott, I am very thankful to have gained many years of experience being a historian, scientist, writer, artist, musician, and much more. I will take these skills with me far beyond academic disciplines and incorporate them into my life."

Congratulations, Dean, on your graduation and all that you have accomplished. The Talcott community celebrates you and looks forward to seeing where your curiosity leads next!



TMA Student Achievements 2026

In 2026, Talcott Mountain Academy (TMA) students participated in the Connecticut Science & Engineering Fair, Connecticut History Day, CSW UConn Writing, and CSW UConn Arts competitions. We are proud to celebrate the many accomplishments of our students across these academic and creative disciplines. Congratulations to all of our students for their hard work and outstanding achievements!

Connecticut Science & Engineering Fair | Quinnipiac University March 2-14, 2026

Sheldon Hsiao (7th grade)

Sensory Triggers of Defensive Behavior in Manduca sexta

- Connecticut Science Fair Association Life Science Awards with The Jackson Laboratory — 2nd Place Life Sciences 7th grade - \$200 & trophy
- Alexion Biotechnology Awards — 5th Place Biotechnology 7th grade - trophy

Nikhil Krishnamurthy (7th grade)

Operation Brine Shrimp: Optimizing Life Conditions

- Connecticut Science Fair Association Life Science Awards with The Jackson Laboratory — 3rd Place Life Sciences 7th grade - \$100 & trophy
- Alexion Biotechnology Awards — Finalist Biotechnology 7th grade - CSF Medallion

Dean Raptis (8th grade)

A Cognitive Analysis of Social Media Engagement and Multitasking Behaviors in Adult Attention and Focus Endurance

- Infosys Foundation Computer Science Awards — Middle School Finalist - Medallion

Connecticut History Day | Torrington Regional Contest March 14, 2026

Nikhil Krishnamurthy (7th grade)

The Discovery of Insulin and its Reforms

- Junior Individual Website — 1st Place

Dean Raptis (8th grade)

Betrayal, Dehumanization, and Devastation: How the Guatemala Syphilis Experiments Revolutionized Bioethics through Global Reaction and Reform

- Junior Papers — 2nd Place

Lincoln Taylor (7th grade)

The Fire That Never Dies: The Tragedy of Centralia

- Junior Papers — Honorable Mention
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2026 CSW UConn Writing Awards & Recognitions

GRADE 8

Gold Award Nonfiction: Dean Raptis

"Twisting Power: An Analysis of the Interconnected Civic Power Plays in Animal Farm and Modern Politics"

Honorable Mention: Dean Raptis

"Frozen Finn"

GRADE 7

Silver Award Nonfiction: Sheldon Hsiao

"From Fairness to Fear: Analyzing the Rise of Tyranny in Animal Farm"

Silver Award Fiction: Nikhil Krishnamurthy

"The Animal Trek"

GRADE 6

Gold Award Fiction: Naarah

"Zungenbrecher (Tongue Twisters)"

Honorable Mention Fiction: Lincoln Taylor

"The Attack of Feathery Fiends"

GRADE 5

Silver Award Fiction: Audrey

"The Mirror of Truth"

2026 CSW UConn Arts Awards

Painting

Silver Award: Sheldon Hsiao

"Washington Monument"



Photograph

Silver Award: Dean Raptis

"Winter's Exhale"



LEARN MORE

To learn more about how Talcott Mountain Academy is shaping the next generation, visit talcottscience.org/talcott-mountain-academy/

TMSC Homeschool & Robotics Programs

At Talcott Mountain Science Center (TMSC)'s Homeschool and Robotics programs, students have opportunities to explore science, technology, engineering, and mathematics through immersive experiences designed to spark curiosity, build confidence, and foster a lifelong love of learning. Registration is now open for upcoming programs.



HOMESCHOOL PROGRAM | REGISTRATION OPEN FOR FALL 2026 & SPRING 2027

TMSC's Homeschool Program offers students ages 6-13 the opportunity to deepen their understanding of STEM subjects while nurturing their innate curiosity. Guided by Talcott's dedicated instructors, homeschooled students engage in hands-on learning, collaborate with peers, and build a strong sense of community while fostering a lifelong love of learning.

This year's offerings include opportunities for students to explore anatomy, marine science, physics, energy, coding, electronics, and engineering design through interactive experiences that encourage creativity, critical thinking, and discovery.

"We love the flexibility and creativity of the homeschool programs, as we can bring our newest innovative teaching ideas to an audience of excited and enthusiastic students," says Dr. Brigette Zacharczenko, Life Science Teacher at Talcott Mountain Academy and STEM Programs Manager at TMSC. "It's so fun getting to know the students who come back session after session!"



REGISTER TODAY

Parents and guardians can register for Fall 2026 and Spring 2027 Homeschool Programs by visiting talcottscience.org/science-center/homeschool-groups/

ROBOTICS PROGRAM | REGISTRATION OPEN FOR FALL 2026

For decades, TMSC students have explored robotics through teamwork, innovation, and competition. In recent years, Talcott's robotics program, Talcott Lightning, has experienced exciting growth through participation in the FIRST LEGO League (FLL), where students design, build, and program robots to solve real-world challenges.

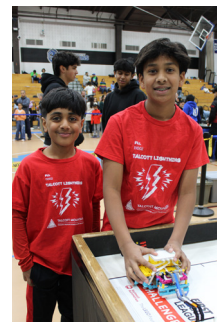
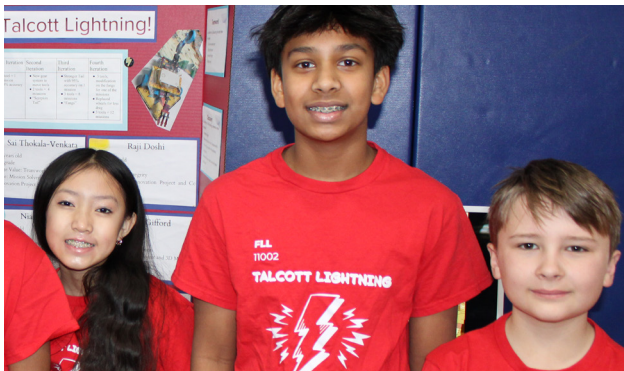
The program emphasizes far more than robotics. Students develop critical thinking, teamwork, engineering design, programming, communication, and problem-solving skills while collaborating to tackle increasingly complex challenges. During the 2025 season, Talcott Lightning earned the Core Values Award at regional qualifiers and advanced to the state competition.

This fall, students ages 9-14 are invited to join TMSC's FIRST LEGO League Robotics team as they prepare for the 2026 CANOPY Challenge. Throughout the eight-week program, students will build, code, test, and compete while gaining hands-on experience in engineering and technology.



REGISTER TODAY

Parents and guardians can register for the Fall 2026 Robotics Program by visiting talcottscience.org/science-center/robotics



LEARN MORE

To learn more about Talcott Mountain Science Center and upcoming programs, visit talcottscience.org/science-center/



SUPPORT TALCOTT MOUNTAIN SCIENCE CENTER, ACADEMY, & RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Your generosity helps Talcott continue to inspire learners of all ages. Gifts to Talcott Mountain Science Center, Academy, & Research Institute support hands-on STEM programs, outdoor exploration, and innovative learning opportunities for students in grades K-12. Every contribution helps fuel curiosity, creativity, and discovery on the mountaintop.

Make a gift today! Visit talcottscience.org/donate or scan the QR code.

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