

December 2020



## LAURA

STEM RESEARCH AND  
DEVELOPMENT INSTRUCTOR  
TAOS ACADEMY & TAOS TYGER LAB  
(ECYBERMISSION, JSHS)

### WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN THIS FIELD?

I originally wanted to work for the scientific world, but a chronic autoimmune disorder caused me to change focus in 10th grade. I ended up interning for a science teacher who was also an actual scientist, and decided that mentoring was the focus I needed to take.

### WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE MENTOR RELATIONSHIP THAT YOU FIND/FOUND MOST BENEFICIAL, INSPIRING, OR MOTIVATING?

I work with students who have learning disabilities or economic disadvantages, many are expected to drop out. To see them share their ideas with the world, and be valued for it, then to see them graduate and go to college is the biggest inspiration.

### WHAT WOULD BE YOUR MOST SAGE ADVICE TO A STUDENT, JUST BEGINNING TO CONSIDER A CAREER IN SCIENCE?

Everybody should keep their minds open and not just commit to one area. Explore different STEM fields and don't just do what is expected of you. Know that there are people out there that do value your views, as long as you put in the work to demonstrate them.

### WHAT IS MOST REWARDING ABOUT YOUR JOB? WHAT MAKES IT ALL WORTHWHILE?

Seeing a kid who most people in the community gave up on make a lot of personal sacrifices to get their work out there, and to show the community and world that their ideas have merit, too, is incredibly rewarding. Then, to see that same kid graduate and go to college is worth more than the paycheck.

### WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR YOUR INDUSTRY?

To create new visions, be a productive scientist, and inspire the next generation of science and scientists.