

# The **SPARK** Program

Student-driven academic and leadership program that seeks to empower the next generation of youth scholars.



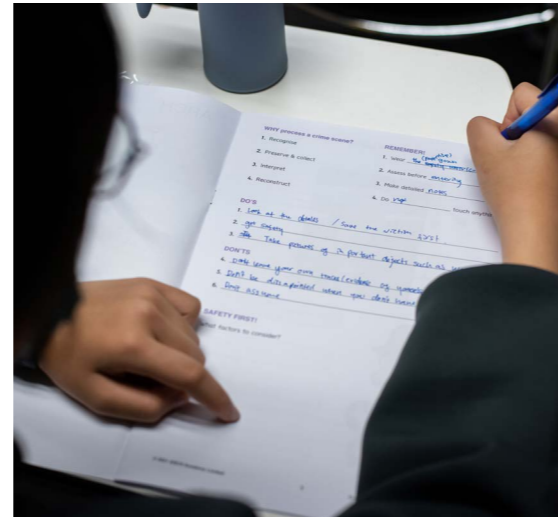
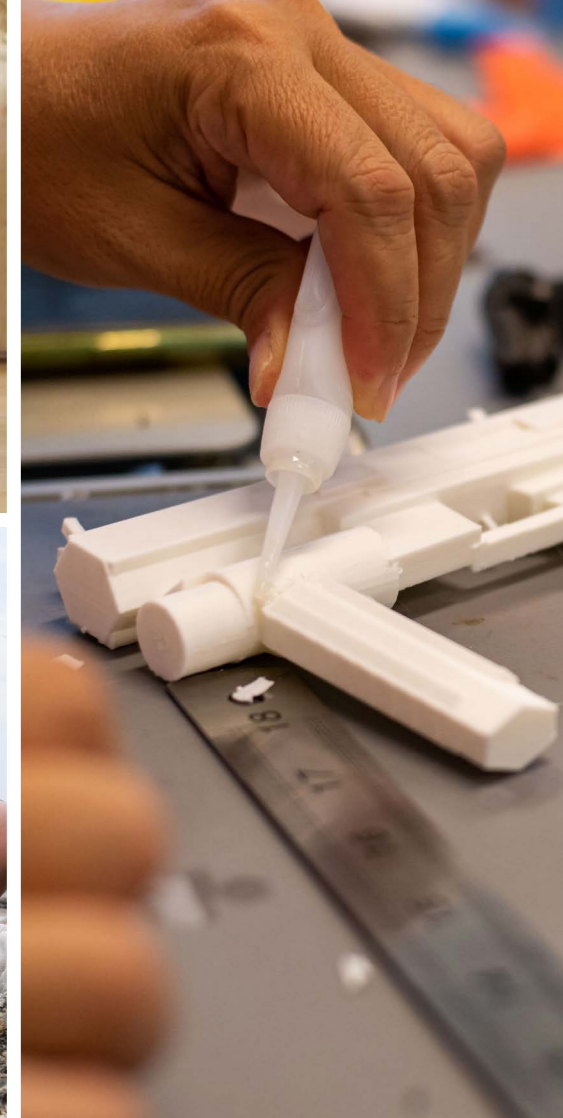
# About

The SPARK Program is a student-driven academic and leadership program that seeks to empower the next generation of youth scholars. Our independent studies program exposes scholars to diverse topics across the humanities, social sciences, and STEM. SPARK promotes students' inquisitiveness, intellectual and personal growth - qualities that will make them stand out for future college admissions, careers and beyond!

# Mission

SPARK fosters lifelong learning through engaging scholars in deep-learning in their pursuit of knowledge!

SPARK scholars will be inspired to make community impact and become the next generation of leaders and changemakers!



# History


Building off a decade of success advising students across Asia, the UK and the US, ARCH Education faculty have mentored students in their pursuit of diverse interests and passions through tailor-made passion projects.

Through passion projects, students engaged in independent studies with a mentor and were able to demonstrate intellectual rigor, inquisitiveness, research, leadership skills and social impact.

As a result, 84% of ARCH students who were admitted to Ivy League and top 15 US universities had explored passion projects<sup>1</sup>.

The learning outcomes, development and success of our students associated with passion projects formed the foundation of the SPARK Program. We hope to inspire more students to discover their passions and lead with impact!

<sup>1</sup> Calculated based on U.S. News' latest rankings and ARCH admissions results as of 2022.



“According to Harvard researchers, deeper learning allows students to be critical thinkers, problem posers, and problem solvers who can work through complexity, beyond the routine, and live productively in this rapidly changing world.”<sup>1</sup>

## Our Approach

Likewise, deeper teaching promotes critical thinking and helps students build a new scholarly identity — one that enables them to not only master core academic content, but also to communicate and collaborate with intellectual confidence as active agents of their own learning.<sup>2</sup>

The SPARK Program adapts deeper learning theories and approaches in designing our independent studies curriculum.

Each student in the program is supported by a SPARK mentor. Students are able to explore an area of interest, develop ideas, deepen understandings, collaborate and build a sense of ownership with the guidance from their mentor.

SPARK instructors are vetted as deeper learning mentors. They bring diverse academic experience, talents and expertise in a range of disciplines, and a passion for education.

---

<sup>1</sup> Mehta, J. & Fine, S. (2015). The Why, What, Where, and How of Deeper Learning in American Secondary Schools. Students at the Center: Deeper Learning Research Series. Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future. Retrieved from <https://jfforg-prod-new.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/The-Why-What-Where-How-121415.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Lampert, M. (2015). Deeper Teaching. Students at the Center: Deeper Learning Research Series. Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future. Retrieved from <https://jfforg-prod-new.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/Deeper-Teaching-120315.pdf>

# Our Program



**Identify Area of Interest**



**Match with SPARK Mentor**



**Inquiry**



**Final Project**



**Impact Project\***

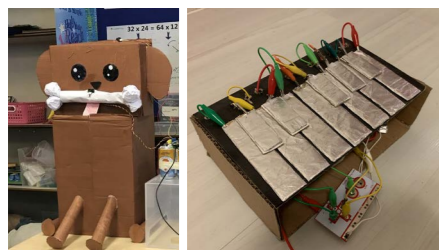
\*For Leadership Track only



## Program Tracks

	Passion Track	Leadership Track
Explore (Academic, Interests or Other Disciplines)	✓	✓
Skills Development (Research, Communication, etc.)	✓	✓
Reflection of Learning	✓	✓
Application of Learning to a Final Project	✓	✓
Leadership Training		✓
Impact Project		✓

### Case study: Music Innovation



**Identify Area of Interest**

Joining the robotics club and enrolling in a computing class in 4th grade SPARKed L.K.'s passion for robotics and technology. Her first innovation was an interactable cardboard dog. An accomplished viola player, L.K. sought to pursue a more sophisticated project, further combining her interest in music and innovation by creating and coding a symphony using recycled materials.



**Match with SPARK Mentor**

While L.K. had the idea, she needed help to execute it. L.K. engaged ARCH's STEM mentor, a US-based boarding school science teacher, to assist her in planning and developing this project. Mentor and student met bi-weekly for 6 months.



**Inquiry**

Together, they identified the software needed to support this project and syllabus to direct the learning and skills required to execute her idea. L.K. 3D designed a recorder using the software TinkerCad. Additionally, her piano was made from cardboard, paper, and tinfoil. L.K. rendered this project interactable using the MaKey-Makey invention kit and Scratch.



**Final Project**

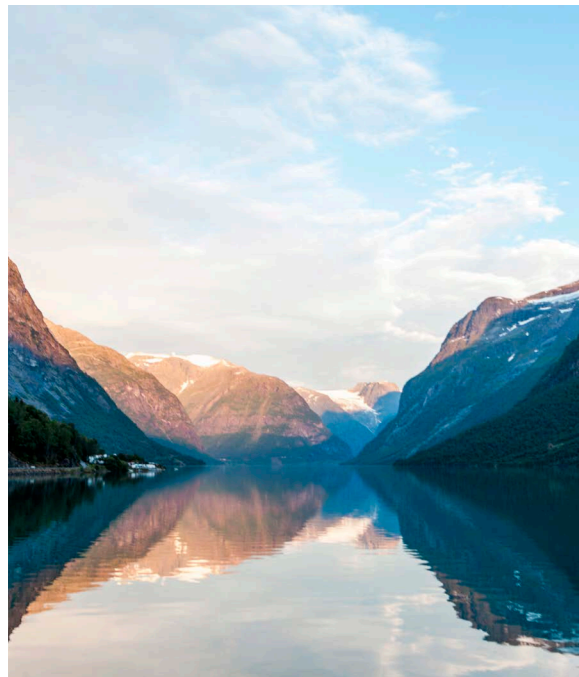
L.K. and her mentor were able to work through several challenges by reaching out to the software designer to help design a work around for a hurdle they faced coding the recording. Ultimately, L.K. produced a multi-media link playing her "symphony".



**Impact Project**

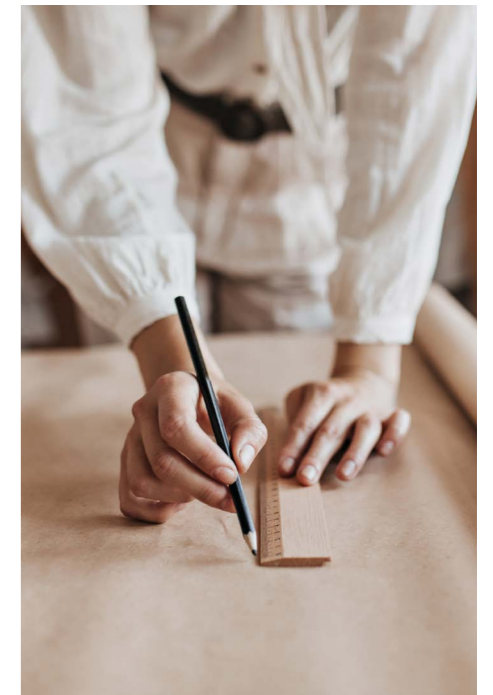
L.K. used this passion project in her boarding school applications to demonstrate her inquisitive nature, passion for programming and music, and her problem-solving skills when facing a challenge.

# Past Student Project Examples

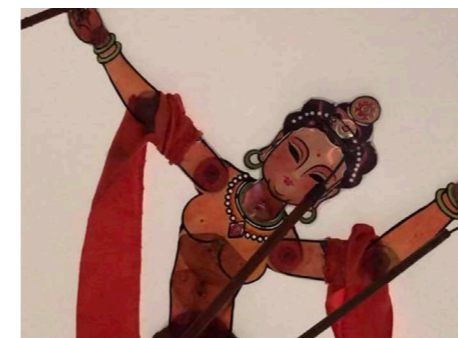


- The Art and Science of Cheesemaking
- Psychology of Gardening
- Gender Inequality in Rural China
- Feminist Theory and Publishing
- Refugee Art Therapy
- East and West Philosophy

- Smog and Environmental Solutions
- Unisex Fashion and History
- World War II History of Hong Kong
- Sino-US Relations and Diplomacy
- Impersonations and Improvisation



- Magic Performance
- Screenwriting
- Eco-tourism
- Puppet Revitalization





## *Case Study:* Puppet Revitalization

A.L.'s "spark" began while traveling to Gansu while volunteering with a local NGO Wu Zhi Qiao. While she was there, she learned about the tradition of shadow puppetry. Based on her interests, ARCH matched A.L. with a SPARK mentor to give her on-going feedback and support as she navigated her journey of learning puppetry and designing a final project. Initially she and her mentor explored the cultural tradition, but A.L.'s natural curiosity went beyond just studying the artform – she wanted to immerse herself in it.

During the pandemic when she couldn't revisit Gansu, A.L. adapted by reaching out to a local puppet troupe in HK, where she became a practicing shadow puppeteer, performing at local schools. Next, she started an entrepreneurial project to promote cultural preservation through selling DIY puppet kits, donating proceeds back to the NGO that started her interest. It has been exciting to come full circle and see that A.L. not only learned a new passion but is now helping others discover their own through her outreach and cultural preservation work.

“Puppet project was the platform through which I could share my niche interest in traditional Chinese performing arts. I started to celebrate my curiosity and bold innovation, which the ARCH counselors helped cultivate and encourage.

Instead of doubting myself, I mobilized, creating cultural bridges between Asia and the U.S. to further promote understanding of this art form.”

– Student A.L.

# Past Students' Boarding Schools and Universities Destinations\*

## Universities

- Boston University
- Brown University
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Columbia University
- Cornell University
- Dartmouth College
- Duke University
- Harvard University
- Johns Hopkins University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- New York University
- Northwestern University
- Princeton University
- Stanford University
- Tufts University
- University of California – Berkeley
- University of California – Los Angeles
- University of Chicago
- University of Michigan
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Southern California
- University of Virginia
- Yale University

*And more!*

## Boarding Schools:

- Avon Old Farms School
- Bement School
- Berkshire School
- Blair Academy
- Choate Rosemary Hall School
- Deerfield Academy
- Emma Willard School
- Fay School
- Groton School
- Hotchkiss School
- Indian Mountain School
- Kent School
- Lawrenceville School
- Loomis Chaffee School
- Milton Academy
- Miss Porter's School
- Peddie School
- Philips Academy Andover
- Phillips Exeter Academy
- Rectory School
- Rumsey Hall School
- St. Andrew's School
- St. Paul's School
- Stevenson School
- Suffield Academy
- Taft School

*And more!*

\*Partial List



## How to Apply?

Eligibility: Priority for ARCH US/UK consultation students. All students must submit the following application components:

- Online Application Form
- In-Person or Virtual Interview
- Application Essays

(approximately 250 words each)

- What is your interest and why?
- What do you hope to take away from the program?



## Become a **SPARK** Mentor!

SPARK mentors will work closely with our SPARK Program Director in designing an enriching and stimulating curriculum for our global community of scholars. We welcome mentors from a diverse range of backgrounds who can bring their unique experiences to the program.

If you are a graduate student, academic, professional, or organization interested in becoming a SPARK mentor, please contact us for more information.





ARCH Education Group is a Hong Kong-based educational institute on a mission to help students bridge their educational gaps and pave their unique paths to primary and secondary schools, universities, and future careers. Serving students aged 7-20, we provide a wide range of educational offerings, including skill-based enrichment courses, academic enhancements, exam prep, and admissions guidance for boarding schools and universities in the UK and US.

ARCH Education Group Limited

(+852) 3568-0406

[admin@arch-education.com](mailto:admin@arch-education.com)

[www.arch-education.com](http://www.arch-education.com)

2/F & 4/F Wilson House, 19-27 Wyndham Street, Central, Hong Kong

The SPARK Program:

