

Raise the Floor, a support program at Gateway Community and Technical College for women interested in STEM careers, hosted its first Two-Gen Workshop in the fall of 2015. The program partnered with the Cincinnati Squash Academy, a non-profit organization that uses the disciplined game of squash to help transform talented students in underserved communities. Girls aged 10-13 and their moms learned how fun science can be as they discovered how electricity works. ATech Training Inc., a local advanced manufacturing company that works closely with the program, volunteered materials and provided hands-on activities, including building an electric circuit and LED bracelets.

The goal of the 2Gen workshop is twofold. First, the mothers will gain an increased understanding of the leadership and technical skills required to be successful in manufacturing, and in return will seek employment in the field. Second, the girls will leave with a solid understanding about what courses they should be taking in high school as well as dual credit opportunities that are available through the college. The three-hour workshop taught mothers about different manufacturing majors, enrollment processes, and the support services offered through the Raise the Floor program, while their daughters were given the opportunity to be exposed to STEM at an early age. This concept promotes mutual learning and shared excitement for Science, Math, Engineering, and Technology.

Laura Lyons, CEO of ATech Training Inc. and chair of the Raise the Floor initiative shared, “Women are naturally good at working with electricity, but they may believe they’re not because they’re girls. Exposing young girls to science and math will increase their confidence. You could say we’re empowering them through electricity.”

The aim of the collaboration is to provide as many opportunities as possible to change the trajectory of a woman and her family, and help them become self-sufficient through empowerment and education. This experience builds upon the objective of the Raise the Floor program for women by providing an engaging experience to introduce them to advanced manufacturing – both the academic requirements and the employment environment.

