Guidance Update: Upcoming Events and Opportunities
11/6/26 edition

(The opportunities and events that are listed here have been sent to us from various sources. They are not endorsed by us. We are simply sharing information.)

Gap Year Solutions Night - 11/18 (Zoom)

Join us on **Wednesday, November 18th, from 7-8 PM** to learn more about the wonderful world of Gap Years!

Find out why more students are taking a Gap Year between high school and college. Many teens want to increase college and workplace readiness by exploring interests, traveling, improving professional skills, and engaging in other experiences that increase confidence, independence, and maturity. Join Katherine Stievater, founder of Gap Year Solutions for a presentation and Q&A about why students choose to take a Gap Year, and how to plan transformational and purposeful Gap time on any budget.

Register for the Zoom webinar here: https://forms.gle/oZj5qvEHeY9c75uB6. (**Students: do NOT use your school emails to register - sometimes that causes issues with the process)**

Ladder Internships

Ladder Internships is a selective, virtual startup internship program for high school students, founded and run by Harvard alums. Selected students work with founders with backgrounds from Harvard iLabs, Google, Microsoft, and McKinsey on real projects in technology, finance, marketing, etc.
Students can choose from three pathways:

- **Startup Program:** Work on real projects inside a startup.
- **CEO Program:** Work directly with a CEO.
- **Executive Fellowship:** Get a guaranteed 1:1 internship with a founder or CEO who has raised over $1 million.

Our alums have earned admission to Stanford, Harvard, and Brown. 64% of them had their managers write a recommendation letter to support their application. More info in our brochure.

No prior experience required.

Winter Cohort Deadline: November 15th. Apply here.

The AI Founders Challenge by Onward

The AI Founders Challenge, led by **Harvard student mentors**, takes students from a problem worth solving to a working AI product and a live pitch in front of judges. Over eight weeks, students move through four phases: Discover, Build, Refine, and Compete, finishing with a prototype, a business model and a live presentation at the Grand Finals.

Students use AI not just as a topic of study but as a building tool, and then learn the harder skill of turning a prototype into something that solves a real problem for real people. **All students will showcase their projects in the Semifinals, with the top 10 solo participants or teams advancing to the Grand Finals.**

Programme Details

- **Programme Starts:** 28th November 2026
- **Eligibility:** Grades 8 to 12
- **Duration:** 8 weeks, Saturdays, live, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM EDT (on Zoom)
- **Participation:** Students register individually and can participate solo or form teams of 2-5 members

→ **To know more: https://joinonwards.com/competitions/8-weeks**

→ **Application Form: https://joinonwards.com/competitions/8-weeks/register**

Amazon Future Engineer Scholarship

The Amazon Future Engineer Scholarship helps students interested in software development engineering or automation engineering with up to **$40,000 in college funding and internship opportunities at Amazon.**

To apply students must:

- Be high school seniors who are U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or employment authorized to work in the United States.
- Be planning to attain a bachelor's degree in automation engineering, computer science, software engineering, mechanical engineering, or other eligible fields of study from an accredited 4-year college or from a 2-year college with the intent to transfer to a 4-year college.
- Have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.3 on a 4.0 scale (or equivalent).
- Demonstrate financial need.

To learn more, visit Amazon Future Engineer Scholarship

Deadline to apply is January 5, 2027.

Lumiere Scholars Essay Award

The Lumiere Scholars Essay Award is an essay competition open to high school students (grades 9 to 12) worldwide. Winners share more than $11,000 in cash prizes and scholarships to do independent research with a PhD mentor**.** Prompts come from professors at Cambridge, Brown, Dartmouth, and Duke.

Top essayists are invited to the Gala Dinner at Oxford University in July 2027, keynoted by two Nobel Laureates in Physics.

More info here: https://www.lumiere-education.com/lumiere-scholars-essay-award

For questions, please contact Dr. Dhruva Bhat at dhruva.bhat@lumiere.education.

Horizon Academic Essay Prize

The Horizon Academic Essay Prize is a free essay competition open to high school students worldwide. The top 3 essays win up to $1,000 in cash and scholarships worth up to $6,950. Gold, Silver, Bronze and Honorable Mention winners in each prompt also receive scholarships.

2027 theme: "Back to the Future". Choose one of five questions on AI, robotics, climate, health, or geopolitics. Max 1,000 words.

Register for free by January 17, 2027: essay.horizoninspires.com/registration

For questions, email essayprize@horizoninspires.com.