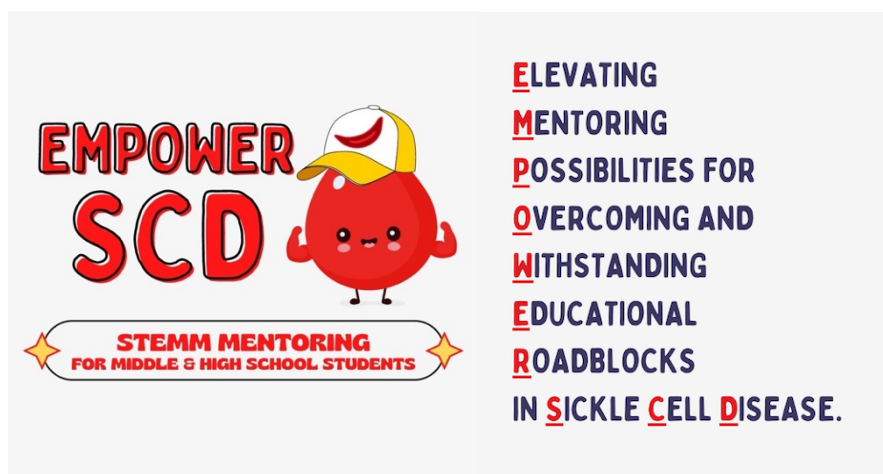


Mentor youth with Sickel Cell Disease!



EMPOWER SCD is recruiting mentors from undergraduate or graduate STEMM degree programs at Emory University, Georgia Tech, Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Spelman College. Mentors will be paired with one middle or high school student with Sickel Cell Disease during the 2026-2027 academic year. We are seeking 20 mentors for this cohort.

Near-Peer Mentor Commitments:

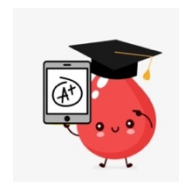
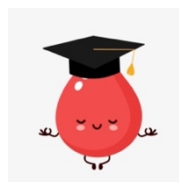
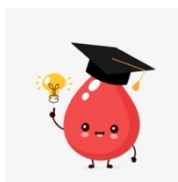
- ❖ Kick-off event: 5-day Summer Camp in June/July 2025 (~4 hours per day)
- ❖ Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Sickel Cell Education Day (September 2026)
- ❖ All-Hands meetings (October 2026, January 2027, March 2027)
- ❖ Online participation:
 - 3 monthly Mentee Track meetings hosted by Near-Peer Mentors
 - 3 monthly meetings with a Senior Mentor
 - 36 weekly Mentee/Near-Peer Mentor Team meetings
- ❖ Near-Peer Mentors will receive compensation for time spent on program activities.
 - \$200 to participate in summer camp + \$700 for the academic year (AY)

Interested in becoming a Near-Peer Mentor? Find out more by scanning the QR code!

- Applications will be accepted through December 4, 2025.
- Notice of acceptance will be sent out by January 16, 2026.
- Upon acceptance, Near-Peer Mentors will complete self-paced training by April 2026.



Direct any questions to Drs. Hardy and Payne – Elaissa.hardy@emory.edu or Jason.payne@choa.org



EMPOWER SCD – Elevating Mentoring Possibilities for Overcoming and Withstanding Educational Roadblocks in Sickle Cell Disease: STEMM (medicine) mentoring for middle and high students with Sickle Cell Disease.

In this nine-month hospital-based STEMM mentoring program, we aim to create near-peer mentoring for middle and high school students who receive treatment for SCD to solidify their STEMM identity, improve their academic performance, and maintain aspirations for pursuing post-secondary education.

By implementing this longitudinal mentoring program, we intend to help individual young people with SCD thrive in school and envision themselves as having college potential, as a first step towards transforming the STEMM ecosystem to include more people of color and people with disabilities who seek STEMM careers.

EMPOWER SCD participants will be divided into two tracks, based on the grade they will be entering in the Fall semester following recruitment into the program. The Middle School Track will comprise rising 7th and 8th graders and the High School Track will comprise rising 9th-12th graders. Near-Peer Mentors will be matched with a middle or high school student.



We are currently recruiting Near-Peer Mentors for Cohort II (September 2025 – March 2027).

Near-Peer Mentors can be undergraduate or graduate students who are currently enrolled at Emory University, Georgia Tech, Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Spelman College in a STEMM major, with interest in mentoring, K-12 education, and/or outreach.

Near-Peer Mentor Involvement

- ❖ Applications period: now through December 4, 2025.
- ❖ Notice of acceptance will be sent out by January 16, 2026.
- ❖ Near-Peer Mentors will complete self-paced training by April 2026.
- ❖ Kick-off 5-day Summer Camp in June/July 2026
 - We understand Near-Peer Mentors may have other summer commitments. We prefer that Near-Peer Mentors attend 20hrs of summer camp, but attendance is not mandatory and will not preclude you from participating during the school year.
- ❖ Children's Sickle Cell Education Day (September 2026)
- ❖ All-Hands meetings (October 2026, January 2027, March 2027)
- ❖ Online participation:
 - 3 monthly Mentee Track meetings hosted by Near-Peer Mentors
 - 3 monthly Mentoring the Near-Peer Mentor meetings
 - Near-Peer Mentors will have the ability to connect and network with Senior Mentors – Physicians, Engineers, or Scientists.
 - 36 weekly Mentee/Mentor Team meetings.
- ❖ Mentor will receive compensation for time spent on program activities.
 - \$200 to participate in summer camp (\$10 per hour x 20 hours).
 - \$700 for 9 months of weekly meetings

Details:

- **Summer Camp:** in-person at the Johnson STEM Activity Center, Atlanta, Georgia. The annual 5-day camp each June/July will serve as the kick-off event for each Cohort's 9-month program period. Camp will be the first time the new Near-Peer Mentor/Mentee pairs ("Teams") meet each other in-person and the entire Cohort gathers as a group. Each day's schedule will include STEMM enrichment activities, engineering demonstrations, Johnson STEM Activity Center exercises, socializing, and health and wellness checks. Lunch and snacks will be provided. On the final day of Camp, the mentees' parents and guardians will be invited to meet the EMPOWER SCD Leadership and their child's Near-Peer Mentor, hear their child's goals, receive tips about how to effectively involve their child's teachers in EMPOWER SCD activities, and participate in a Q&A session about program logistics for the next 9 months.
- **Weekly Mentee/Near-Peer Mentor meetings ("Team Meetings"):** Remote (phone or Zoom). Weekly Team meetings (n=36), which will last a minimum of 30 minutes will be loosely structured and can be used for homework support, educational activities, mentoring, problem solving, and STEMM identity conversations.
- **Monthly Mentee Track meetings ("Track Meetings"):** Remote (Zoom). We will hold monthly (n=9) community building meetings for the n=10 Mentees participating in each of any given Cohort's two Tracks. Meetings, which will last 30-45 minutes, will be organized and run by a revolving roster of Near-Peer Mentors and include age-appropriate team building and educational games.
- **Quarterly EMPOWER SCD gatherings ("All-Hands Meetings"):** in-person at either Emory University campus, Georgia Tech campus, or Johnson STEM Activity Center. In partnership with the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia, each half-day meeting will focus on a different theme and could include, for example, campus tours of science facilities, seminars by college admissions staff about college preparation (academics and mental health), lectures and demonstrations on relevant topics from Foundation staff, and pipeline presentations by STEMM field recruiters. Each meeting will also include opportunities for parent/guardian discussion groups and socializing. The final All-Hands meeting, at the end of each Cohort's program period, will be a culminating celebration.
- **Optional Discussion Board Posts:** Password-protected discussion boards for each Track will be established on the EMPOWER SCD website to facilitate as needed communications by Mentees and Near-Peer mentors with each other, with the EMPOWER SCD Leadership Team, and with Senior Mentors. Each discussion board will include, at the top, in prominent text, who will have access to posts made there and warn against posting private or sensitive information.

Project Year (PY) refers to each 12-month (April–March) fiscal year.

Cohort Period refers to 19-month (September–March) period that encompasses all activities relevant to a specific EMPOWER SCD Cohort.

Program Period refers to 9-month (July–March) subset of a given Cohort Period during which the EMPOWER SCD intervention is implemented.

Direct any questions to Drs. Hardy and Payne – Elaissa.hardy@emory.edu or Jason.payne@choa.org

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