SUPPORT KIT

High-Power Rocket Bootcamp

Founded and run by Tanaka Chonyera · Indiana

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Facts as of November 16, 2026

CONTACT

To fund a cohort, email me at tanaka@dreamernaut.com with "Funding" in the subject line. To host a build day, use "Hosting" in the subject line. Volunteers sign up with the form at tanakachonyera.com/support.

The latest version of this support kit is at tanakachonyera.com/support-kit.

AT A GLANCE

Program	High-Power Rocket Bootcamp, a free program where students build, paint and launch their own high-power rockets
Founder	Tanaka Chonyera, mechanical and aerospace engineer; Project Manager, Capital Projects at Eli Lilly and Company
Started	August 2025. The first launch was on August 24, 2025, at the Rocketeers of Central Indiana field in Muncie.
Bootcamps	10, from August 2025 to September 2026, for 362 students, with 5 launch days, plus 1 in progress
Participants trained	390+
Rockets built / launched	335 built (278 student, 57 volunteer); 170+ launched
Volunteers trained	I've trained 56 volunteers to build their own rockets.
Maximum altitude	5,000 feet
Adult volunteers	174+
Student contact hours	2,800+
Ages	8 and up. Ages 6 and 7 can take part with a parent at the table for the build.
Cost to families	Free. There is a $25 retention fee, which I refund when the student attends every session.
Cost per student	$490 at my most recent bootcamp (Lilly Global Day of Service, 145 students, September 2026). Average cost per student, one student per rocket: $564 (materials used, 263 students across 8 bootcamps). It covers kits, motors, materials, safety gear, food, transport and the venue. It does not include the hours our volunteers put in for free, so the value each kid receives is higher. I brought the cost per student down 60%, from $1,227 at my first bootcamp.
Total program spend	$159K from April 2025 to November 2026
Raised so far	$161K
Goal	1,000 student rockets, and the most rockets per capita in the world for Indiana

Figures as of November 16, 2026. Figures are backed by verified invoices, receipts and grant records. Sources: tanakachonyera.com/recognition.

ABOUT THE BOOTCAMP

I started the High-Power Rocket Bootcamp in August 2025 and I run it. Students build and paint their own high-power rocket with trained volunteers at the tables. Each cohort now has one five-hour build day and then a launch day at an approved launch site, where the rockets fly as high as 5,000 feet. Every student takes their rocket home.

My partner on the bootcamp is MEPI, the Minority Engineering Program of Indianapolis. The bootcamp is separate from my job at Eli Lilly.

The bootcamp is free for every student because the organizations below cover the cost.

FUND A COHORT

At my most recent bootcamp, running a cohort cost $490 per student. That covers the rocket kits, motors, materials and safety gear, plus food, transport and the venue. That's only what we spend. It doesn't include the labor: our volunteers put in a lot of hours at every bootcamp for free, and that time is part of what the kids get. So the value each kid receives is higher than $490. I brought the cost per student down 60%, from $1,227 at my first bootcamp. Since April 2025 the program has raised $161K and spent $159K.

Who has funded it

FUNDER	SUPPORT
MEPI (Minority Engineering Program of Indianapolis)	$80K, including a $40K Cummins grant
Lilly Social Impact	$75K for the 2026 Global Day of Service cohort
Purdue University	Funded the Indiana Black Expo Youth Leadership Summit cohort
System Three Resins	In-kind supporter

To fund a cohort, email me at tanaka@dreamernaut.com with "Funding" in the subject line. Tell me whether you have a community, a school or a number of students in mind, and I will come back to you with what that cohort takes.

HOST A BUILD DAY

Build days happen wherever a partner gives me a room. So far builds have been in Indianapolis, Fishers and Lebanon, with launch days in Muncie and Pence and at Sheridan Airport.

- **What you provide:** a room with tables for one cohort, for about five hours on build day.
- **What I bring:** the kits, paint, tools, trained volunteers, and the waivers and paperwork. I am there for the whole build day as the Flyer of Record, and I supervise the build so that every rocket is flight-worthy.
- **Launch day:** rockets fly on a separate day at an approved launch site under FAA airspace coordination.
- **Who hosts:** schools, museums, parks departments, youth organizations, libraries and company sites.
- **Past hosts and program partners:** the Indiana State Museum, the City of Fishers Maker Playground, Enlace Academy, Hattie B. Stokes Elementary, Indiana Black Expo, and Girl Scouts of Central Indiana.

To host, email me at tanaka@dreamernaut.com with "Hosting" in the subject line, and include the venue, the number of students you have in mind, and the months that work for you.

VOLUNTEER

You do not need any rocketry experience to volunteer, because I will teach you everything you need to know. I make a deliberate effort to recruit people who have never done this before.

- **What you do:** you sit at a table with the students and help them through the build, and you help run launch day.
- **Training:** I train every volunteer myself before they work a build day. I've trained 56 volunteers to build their own rockets.
- **Background check:** every volunteer has to pass a background check.
- **How to sign up:** fill out the volunteer form at tanakachonyera.com/support and I will call you.

SAFETY

- Students build the airframes. The motors are commercially manufactured and certified.
- Kids never touch a motor or an igniter. I buy, store, load and arm every one.

- I am the Flyer of Record for every student rocket, on build day and on launch day, so I am responsible for every rocket being built correctly and flying safely.
- Launches follow the NAR or Tripoli safety code of the host club, with FAA airspace coordination, at club launch fields and at Sheridan Airport.
- The program runs under OSHA's hierarchy of controls.

More detail: tanakachonyera.com/join.

COHORTS

#	BOOTCAMP	STUDENT ROCKETS	BUILD	LAUNCH
1	**Summer 2025** Camp Dellwood, Girl Scouts of Central Indiana · Indianapolis · 20 students	20	Aug 2, 9 and 16, 2025	Aug 24, 2025 ROCI field, Muncie
2	**Fall 2025** Park · Indianapolis · 20 students	20	Nov 1, 8 and 15, 2025	Feb 8, 2026 Indiana Rocketry field, Pence (November launches scrubbed for wind)
3	**Winter 2026** Camp Dellwood · Indianapolis · 15 students	15	Feb 1, 2026	Feb 8, 2026 Indiana Rocketry field, Pence
4	**Spring 2026, April 4 group** Camp Dellwood · Indianapolis · 11 students	11	Apr 4, 2026	Apr 19, 2026 Indiana Rocketry field, Pence, during LDRS 44
5	**Spring 2026, April 18 group** Camp Dellwood · Indianapolis · 20 students	20	Apr 18, 2026	Apr 19, 2026 Indiana Rocketry field, Pence, during LDRS 44
6	**Enlace Academy** Indianapolis · 75 students	3*	May 7, 2026	
7	**Indiana Black Expo Youth Leadership Summit** Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis · Funded by Purdue University · 24 students	12*	Jul 17, 2026	
8	**Indiana State Museum, Space Day** Indianapolis · 12 students	12	Jul 18, 2026	Aug 9, 2026 ROCI field, Muncie, with the City of Fishers bootcamp
9	**City of Fishers** Fishers Maker Playground · Fishers · 20 students	20	Aug 2, 2026	Aug 9, 2026 ROCI field, Muncie
10	**Lilly Global Day of Service** Hattie B. Stokes Elementary · Lebanon · 145 students	145	Sep 24, 2026	Sep 25, 2026 Sheridan Airport
11	**MEPI 9th Grade, in progress** MEPI · Indianapolis	In progress*	November 2026 to May 2027	

* Many students per rocket.

RECOGNITION AND COVERAGE

- **Letter of Recognition from Indiana Governor Mike Braun**, presented September 25, 2026, at the Sheridan Airport launch.

- **Lilly's 2026 Global Day of Service**: 124 volunteers helped students at Hattie B. Stokes Elementary in Lebanon build 145 rockets for a launch at Sheridan Airport the next day.
- **Indianapolis Star**, October 29, 2026: "Meet Tanaka Chonyera, the man aiming to inspire next generation of rocket scientists."
- **WTHR (NBC Indianapolis)**, February 26, 2026: "Indianapolis engineer launches free rocket boot camp for kids."
- **Fox59 Indy Now**, June 15, 2026: segment with the City of Fishers, also aired on CBS4.
- **The Week Junior**, April 3, 2026: profile in the People section.

All coverage: tanakachonyera.com/press. Press kit: tanakachonyera.com/press-kit.