

# Rock The Street Wall Street Welcomes New CEO as its Founder Assumes Role of Chair

NEW YORK, NY, USA, May 15, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Rock The Street, Wall Street](#) (RTSWS), a high-impact nonprofit empowers underrepresented high school girls by reintroducing the M in STEM with a focus on financial and investment mathematics, announced its leadership transition. Ashley Leftwich, the Chief Operating Officer, will succeed Maura Cunningham as the Chief Executive Officer, effective July 1. Ms. Cunningham will continue to serve a pivotal role as Founder, Chair and Board Member, focusing on advocacy and outreach across the U.S., U.K. and Canada, while Ms. Leftwich will drive the vision, growth and engagement serving RTSWS students, alumnae and volunteers.



Maura Cunningham, Founder Rock The Street Wall Street

Founded in 2012 by Ms. Cunningham, following her successful 25-year career in finance, RTSWS has been a pioneering force in introducing financial and investment mathematics to a diverse cohort of young women. The organization's mission is twofold: to narrow the gender and racial wealth disparities and to empower young women by igniting their interest in financial sector participation and providing awareness of careers at a pivotal stage in their education, before they select their university courses. This vision leverages the power of STEM professions to uplift families within a single generation. RTSWS is making a profound impact already reaching over 6,000 students. More than 70% of RTSWS female students identify as BIPOC, and 50% attend schools with free and reduced lunch programs. Under Ms. Cunningham's leadership, RTSWS has developed a comprehensive investment literacy curriculum, programming and mentorship that educates and equips young women, resulting in [RTSWS Alumnae](#) pursuing finance and economics at a rate 5x higher than the average female university student.

Trained in mathematics, Ashley Leftwich is stepping in as CEO and brings a strong track record of leadership, expansion and engagement along with a deep commitment to the organization's goals. With a background in statistics and notable experience at a Fortune 100 company, Ms. Leftwich has been instrumental in scaling RTSWS' footprint and operations to encompass over 60 schools across more than 25 cities in three countries. Through effective execution and integrating innovation, Leftwich leads the team day-to-day and will build on RTSWS' success in this next phase.

"I'm proud to chair our esteemed Board, and we each celebrate Maura's vision, fortitude and incredible legacy in increasing girls' interest in financial and investment mathematics. Thanks to Maura, more than 6,000 families have been positively impacted as these young women gain access to the industry and transition into the workforce. They are poised to create a remarkable future and expand the talent pipeline, a testament to the transformative power of Maura's initiative in founding RTSWS," commented Anders Hall, CFA, Chair of the RTSWS Board and Vice Chancellor for Investments and CIO of Vanderbilt University.

"Furthermore, Ashley's expertise in scaling initiatives and deep commitment to fostering financial mathematics and STEM education among young women position her well as CEO for RTSWS," Mr. Hall added. "With Ashley at the helm, we anticipate ongoing evolution, enabling us to empower the next generations of young women to flourish in the financial sector in our shared pursuit of a more equitable future."



Ashley Leftwich, Rock The Street Wall Street CEO, Effective July 1



RTSWS Student Cohort with RTSWS Leadership, Ashley Leftwich (Left) and Maura Cunningham (Right)

Based on Maura's founding thesis and research, girls in the US, UK and Canada perform on par with boys in math during elementary school, however their performance wanes significantly in high school/secondary school, and beyond. Contributing factors include societal biases, lack of female role models in math-related fields, and gender-based socialization. At the university level, women frequently find themselves as solitary figures in finance, math and economics classes, often without much recognition. This lack of visibility contributes to fewer women opting for careers in STEM and in the finance sector, thus perpetuating the gender disparity in these fields. However, research affirms that interventions boosting high school girls' math interest yield positive results in narrowing this gap.

RTSWS' programs reignite girls' enthusiasm for financial mathematics during a critical juncture in their lives when they are making crucial decisions. By highlighting real-world female role models in investment management, mentoring, and financial careers, RTSWS aims to cultivate girls' interest in their financial independence and future professional paths. The organization sparks high school girls' passion for finance, broadening their exposure to and involvement in the global markets.

The transition comes as RTSWS is expanding its support for alumnae through its newly reimagined Alumnae & Career Center. This initiative provides ongoing support to RTSWS alumnae as they navigate university, internships, job shadows and early career roles, ensuring they continue to thrive in competitive financial sectors.

Maura Cunningham commented, "I'm proud to hand over the reins to Ashley, whose commitment has been pivotal to our success. Her forward looking approach leads the team with engagement, technology integration and an exciting vision for our volunteers, schools and sponsors. In my role as Founder, Board Member, and Chair, I will continue to advance the cause of investment literacy while expanding career choices in the M of STEM among young women across our growing footprint. Their ongoing curiosity and accomplishments fuel my passion daily."

RTSWS's impact has been recognized across the industry by leading firms as well as by The White House, Catalyst, Nasdaq, the Women's Bond Club of New York, 100 Women in Finance, Bloomberg and the United Nations among others, underscoring its role as a leader in financial and investment education for young women.

In her remarks about the succession, Ms. Leftwich shared, "It's an honor to follow Maura into the role of CEO and continue working alongside our dedicated RTSWS team. Together, we are committed to empowering the next generation of women in finance, and I am looking forward to creating additional opportunities ahead for our talented students and alumnae as well as new ways to engage our dedicated volunteers and sponsors."

For more information about Rock The Street, Wall Street and its programs and sponsors, [visit](#)

[here](#).

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