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TSC INSIDER

The Official Newsletter of The Skills Center



THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE SKILLS CENTER COLLABORATIVE

The Skills Center would like to congratulate the Tampa Bay Lightning, our amazing partner, for winning their second straight Stanley Cup!

Just as the Lightning and other local sports teams are feeding new energy into "Champa Bay," The Skills Center will soon bring new energy into a part of our community where economic opportunity is needed most. East Tampa, where the new home of The Skills Center Collaborative will be located, has been identified as one of 8 community redevelopment areas in the city of Tampa.

Once fully completed, our new facilities will include a job training/education room, a health and nutrition demonstration kitchen, 3 gymnasiums, multipurpose areas, co-working offices, and event space. All of that combined is expected to create 180 jobs, serve 3,500 youth, and produce an economic impact of more than \$25 million in East Tampa over the next five years.

We're ready to make a difference in our local economy through the power of sports and appreciate the support from our funders, donors and partners.

FROM OUR CO-FOUNDER

Welcome to the second issue of TSC Insider, the official monthly newsletter highlighting the latest news and updates from The Skills Center.

Following the recent reveal of The Skills Center Collaborative building design, we are excited to begin construction, and are currently in the process of selecting a construction management company.

Additionally, we recently met with the Consul General of Canada, Susan Harper and Consul & Senior Trade Commissioner, Jean Pierre Halem, who are committed to supporting The Skills Center Collaborative and helping us continue to grow our relationship with our northern neighbors.

We're also excited to welcome interim Director of the College of Education Sarasota School of Language, Arts Integration and Culture at the University of South Florida, Dr. Marie Byrd to The Skills Center Collaborative team. Dr. Byrd has a strong background in urban school education, working as a principal, curriculum specialist and teacher in Miami Dade County Public Schools.

Next month we'll share more details of our new capital fundraising campaign.

Sincerely,

Celeste Roberts
Executive Director



FEATURED DONOR: BLOOMIN' BRANDS

With around 77,000 team members and more than 1,450 restaurants throughout the globe, Bloomin' Brands is one of the world's largest casual dining companies. They're also this month's featured donor, and if you don't know about the brand, it's about to come into bloom.

With the first Outback Steakhouse opening on Henderson Boulevard in 1988, Bloomin' Brands was quickly established as a hometown restaurant company that strives to be a good neighbor to its consumers. For over 30 years, they have invested in the communities they serve.

Upon first learning about The Skills Center through the youth sports program years ago, Bloomin' Brands

bonded over a shared vision and passion for removing socio economic barriers for disadvantaged children.

The company supports The Skills Center through in-kind donations, volunteer efforts and financial support. Earlier this year, the dining giant pledged \$100,000 dollars to the Capital Campaign -- securing the naming rights at the entrance of the new facility.

Why the naming rights to the entrance? Because it's about opening doors, and giving every child the opportunity to walk through those doors to learn, thrive and transform their lives.



TSC IN THE NEWS



CELESTE ROBERTS COMES FULL CIRCLE WITH THE SKILLS CENTER'S NEW COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

Roberts shares details on how the Collaborative came about and what The Skills Center wants to accomplish.

[**CLICK TO VIEW**](#)



THE SKILLS CENTER SET TO BREAK GROUND FOR NEW FACILITY IN THE FALL

The conceptual design for The Skills Center Collaborative, a 55,000 sq ft state of the art facility in East Tampa, have been revealed.

[**CLICK TO VIEW**](#)

THE FREE PRESS

BUILDING DESIGN REVEALED FOR THE SKILLS CENTER COLLABORATIVE IN TAMPA

The Skills Center Collaborative aims to help level the playing field in education, health and workforce readiness for Tampa youth.

[**CLICK TO VIEW**](#)

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: DONALD JORDEN

Finding His Rhythm On & Off the Court

Ten years ago, Donald Jorden (DJ) was a student playing basketball for the Skills Center Elite travel team. Since then, he continues to grow his skills both on and off the court.

DJ is preparing for his final year at Trinity College in Hartford, CT where he's thriving academically and athletically as a music major and Bantams basketball player earning him countless [collegiate accolades](#).

We caught up with DJ to reflect on his time at The Skills Center, his current athletic and academic success and to hear about his plans for the future.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM THE SKILLS CENTER?

Playing basketball for The Skills Center Elite and having my first in-game dunk during a tournament in South Florida. I was going crazy to say the least, and that moment will be forever etched in my memory.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN AT THE SKILLS CENTER?

One of the greatest insights I gained from playing basketball with The Skills Center is that no one can do it alone, not in basketball and certainly not in life. When a group of unselfish people come together with a common goal, it sets the stage for success every time. I love that my basketball career in AAU started with such a solidified program.

WHAT'S ONE SKILL THAT YOU ARE PROUD OF?

The ability to mentor people who have or are going through the same struggles I faced. I know I can help my community and future generation. I am encouraged when people come to me with questions because it means they trust me and my advice.

THEN NOW



DJ (Top Left) playing for SCE (2011)



DJ playing for Trinity College (2021)

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR NEW STUDENTS?

I tell students to keep practicing their craft every day. A successful person is measured by his/her progress over time, and it's the little things that seem tedious that are necessary for development. I will always continue to work to become 1% better at something each day.

HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE AT TSC IMPACTED YOU TODAY?

I credit TSC for helping me reach my collegiate goals. I built many lasting relationships and met people who I still talk with to this day. Many of my friends from my early days at TSC are now successful, and our experiences through basketball and our time at TSC continue to connect us.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 5 YEARS?

I see myself as a successful musician and possibly a foreign athlete who dominates the court.

GET TO KNOW: TY MATHEN

Role at TSC: Chairman of the Board Hometown: Bunnell, FL

Ty Mathen has lived many lives. He's been an Intelligence Specialist with the US Navy, had a thriving career in the automotive industry, worked at a top technology company and launched two mobile apps of his own (one featured in TechCrunch).

But nothing could prepare him for the day he walked through the doors of The Skills Center. Initially his son was invited to a basketball camp, but he also saw a lot of happy kids. That day, he met the team's coach, Chris Ward and became so motivated by his passion and purpose for The Skills Center that he knew he had to help.

Ty later learned Chris was a co-founder of The Skills Center and witnessed how the youth were learning life skills through basketball.

Fast forward and Ty is currently The Skills Center's Chairman of the Board. He's working to help level the playing field for youth in Hillsborough County. He says "In this role I see my purpose – knowing every action we make moves the organization forward and youth toward their dreams."

He says he's honored to help transition The Skills Center into the next chapter.



WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM YOUR OWN ADOLESCENCE?

I had some really great coaches while playing sports that taught me the importance of mentorship - not only when we are young, but also as adults.

WHAT'S A FUN FACT ABOUT YOU?

When I was a kid, I was on two Nickelodeon shows - Guts and Legends of The Hidden Temple.

WHAT'S A TREND OF TODAY YOU HAVE EMBRACED?

Fortnite. When it first launched, I was playing with my son for weeks trying to win. It reminded me of when Nintendo came out and my brothers and I were trying to beat Mario. Let's just say I was more successful at Mario than Fortnite, but I'm getting closer to that win. I know it!

WHAT'S ONE PIECE OF WISDOM YOU HOPE STUDENTS TAKE WITH THEM?

Wisdom comes on the time payment plan.