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# TSC INSIDER

The Official Newsletter of The Skills Center



## FROM OUR CO-FOUNDER

### KIDS NEED SPORTS MORE THAN EVER

The state of play in 2021 is in flux. While many kids are back playing, significant challenges remain, especially since so many more children became physically and mentally unhealthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Doctors warn that some children may have long term adverse consequences in their mental health.

It's fair to say sports and activity have never been more important. Data suggests children are at risk if they cannot safely return to physical activity or lose interest in playing sports.

According to the Aspen Institute's 2021 State of Play report, many children who have returned to sports, are coming back to diminished services. More than 4 out of 10 families said their community-based sports provider has either closed due to coronavirus, merged or returned with limited capacity. Travel sports parents report similar issues: 46% said their travel-based sports teams closed during the pandemic, merged with another league or club, or returned with limited capacity.

Wealth appears to factor into who plays: This was true before the pandemic and true today. In September 2021, 24% of parents in the highest-income bracket (\$100,000 or more) said their child had resumed sports at a higher level than before COVID-19. Only 13%-14% of kids from the two lower-income brackets returned to sports at a higher pre-pandemic level. This development could have a profound impact on the quality and accessibility of programs, if enough new programs do not emerge to fill the void. For Tampa youth, The Skills Center Collaborative could not be coming at a better time.

In addition to youth development through the power of sports, The Skills Center also supports academic success. The Academic Café virtual tutoring is available for first grade students through high school. Email [info@theskillscenter.org](mailto:info@theskillscenter.org) for more information.

As we close out October, the pops of pink might disappear but the fight against breast cancer continues all year. I have many amazing women who are still in my life because of early detection. Screening Saves Lives. If you or a loved one is looking for more information, please connect with **The Sisters Network** - an organization increasing national attention to the devastating impact breast cancer has in the Black community.



Sincerely,

*Celeste Roberts*

Celeste Roberts  
Executive Director

[Click [here](#) for the full report findings]

## FEATURED DONOR: ENTERPRISE HOLDINGS

Over the summer, **Enterprise Holdings** included The Skills Center in its ROAD Forward campaign. Grants were awarded to nearly 700 nonprofits addressing social and racial equity gaps facing youth and families in local communities in North America and Europe. Combined, the grants totaled more than \$7 million and were distributed across Enterprise's 70 global operating groups.

True to its name, ROAD Forward focuses on Respect, Opportunity, Advancement and Diversity. The initiative supports programs in early childhood development, youth health and wellness and career and college preparation. The Skills Center received \$21,000 for immense work in all of these areas.

A year ago, The Enterprise Holdings Foundation made a commitment to donate \$55 million over the next five years to organizations like The Skills Center to advance social and racial equity. The foundation has donated \$20 million to the **Obama Foundation's My Brother's Keeper Alliance**, **UNCF**, **girls inc.**, and **Parents as Teachers**. Each of these renowned organizations support young people in underserved communities.

[Click [here](#) for more details on ROAD Forward]



## GET TO KNOW: BOBBI DAVIS

**Role at TSC:** Board Member & Lead of Grants Committee

**Hometown:** Westerville, Ohio

A member of The Skills Center board for more than five years, Bobbi Davis has spent her entire career in the nonprofit industry. In Tampa, her work includes: the Tampa Metro YMCA, Children's Board, COVE Behavioral Health, Early Learning Coalition and the Tampa Housing Authority.

In her board role, Bobbi leads the grants committee and identifies donors for the upcoming capital campaign. She says, "Strong nonprofit organizations like The Skills Center have the power to transform individuals and communities for the better."

Bobbi met TSC co-founders Celeste Roberts, Chris Ward and John Arroyo nearly 20 years ago while working on the Youth Opportunity ("YO") project in Tampa. She saw the "magic" that sports-based youth development could have in building strong and successful young adults and continued to work with the trio as they built The Skills Center.

### WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO ABOUT THE NEW THE SKILLS CENTER COLLABORATIVE?

The Skills Center Collaborative brings together a core of services and programs for TSC participants and families that are not available in a single location anywhere in our area. It is a real game changer for the community.

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM YOUR ADOLESCENCE?

I always loved sports. While growing up, the only high school team available was basketball, and later, track and field through a club team. I am very competitive and sports gave me a way to excel.

### WHAT'S A MOMENT FROM YOUR TIME WORKING WITH YOUTH THAT HAS STUCK WITH YOU?

I think anyone who has worked with youth over many years, including me, has that moment when a teen or young adult tells you they remember you with a smile and joy.

### WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF WISDOM THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH TODAY'S YOUTH?

Discover your passion, work hard, and find happiness.

### WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING IN YOUR FREE TIME?

I love to travel with my husband to visit our daughters in the northeast. At home, I love to be outdoors trying to coax my plants to bloom!



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: JOE "JOJO" PHILON

## A Class Act On & Off The Court

Joe Philon joined the Skills Center when he was 5-years-old. Today at 14, "JoJo" is thriving academically and athletically.

He attends Tampa Preparatory School, one of the best private, co-educational middle and high college-preparatory schools in Tampa.

We caught up with JoJo to reflect on his time at The Skills Center and his plans for the future.

### NOW



*JoJo today at 14 years old*

### THEN



*JoJo at 5 years old*

#### WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM YOUR TIME AT THE SKILLS CENTER?

Camp with Coach Fred and Coach Sharp. We had many of the top high school basketball players there and it was good practicing and getting better with them.

I won't forget going to NBA games and participating in fundraising events. Most importantly, I found friends and we've played together since we were in the 3-5 year old basketball league.

#### WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED AT THE SKILLS CENTER?

Most of what I know about basketball, I learned at The Skills Center. I also learned a lot from the robotics and math workshop hosted by Mr. Polaski.

Coach Chris also taught me the importance of doing everything all the way and not giving half effort. Now I push myself on the court and in the classroom.

#### WHAT'S ONE SKILL THAT YOU ARE PROUD OF?

My development as a basketball player. When I first started, I mainly played defense. But the more I practiced with The Skills Center, I became more confident and proud of what I do on the court. I have become an important part of my team..

#### WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR NEW STUDENTS?

Work to become the best version of you and don't get caught up in what others may think of you. Focus on your success but also support your peers.

#### WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 5 YEARS?

I see myself being one of the top basketball players in my class and applying to moves to different colleges.