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TSC INSIDER

The Official Newsletter of The Skills Center



FROM OUR CO-FOUNDER

TSC'S TAMPA Y.E.S. PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH ADVENTHEALTH TO LAUNCH TEEN-FOCUSED FOOD IS HEALTH® INITIATIVE

The Skills Center's Tampa Y.E.S. program, the AdventHealth Foundation and the Hispanic Services Council are working together to pilot a youth version of the Food is Health® program. The goal is to teach teens healthy eating habits and reduce food insecurity by offering access to health education along with fresh, nutritious foods to improve the overall health of local communities.

Through the partnership, TSC students will have access to resources and additional tools to continue healthier eating habits. The nutrition sessions will alternate between the Armature Works demonstration kitchen and The City of Tampa Parks & Recreation at Julian B. Lane Park in Tampa.

Last month, 25 students from The Skills Center participated in nutrition classes that incorporated Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters™ at Home lessons, taught by the Hispanic Services Council. They also learned how to prepare healthy meals with fresh produce through hands-on cooking techniques, and received free vouchers to shop for fresh fruits and vegetables on-site to prepare nutritious meals at home with their families.

"This partnership provides a healthy food perspective for our girls, which leads them to make better choices," said Chris Ward, Co-Founder and Program Director at The Skills Center.

The Skills Center's Tampa Y.E.S. program expands youth participation in sports and encourages regular physical activity and healthy eating habits among middle school minority girls. This program is funded by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Women's Health.

While we prepare to say goodbye to summer, we're looking forward to what's ahead as we officially begin to build The Skills Center Collaborative!

We're pleased to share that we've selected BECK I Envision as our construction partners for the new facility in East Tampa. A partnership between two regarded construction firms -- [The Beck Group](#), a leading national commercial construction firm with award-winning projects; and [Envision](#), a family-owned construction firm from East Tampa -- BECK I Envision truly understands our vision for building The Skills Center Collaborative, and we are excited to join their impressive list of clients.

With our upcoming Capital Campaign officially underway, I am thrilled to receive support from the City of Tampa and Hillsborough County.

I look forward to sharing our progress!

Sincerely,



Celeste Roberts
Celeste Roberts
Executive Director

FEATURED PARTNERSHIP

TAMPA BAY WAVE LAPTOPS FOR KIDS BACK-TO-SCHOOL DRIVE

A new school year is upon us, and the kids of Tampa could use our help! The Skills Center has partnered with Tampa Bay Wave and eSmart Recycling to help provide in need youth with access to the devices and e-learning tools they need through the second annual 'Wave Cares: Laptops for Kids Back-to-School Drive.'

By donating old laptops and tablets, you can help support students in need in Tampa Bay, while also reducing your ecological footprint. All donors will also receive a FREE day pass for open co-working space at the [Wave Venture Center](#) in downtown Tampa.

Donated laptops, tablets and other electronic devices can be new or used, working or not. eSmart Recycling will securely wipe and refurbish all devices with essential applications, licenses and educational tools that students need for school.

Donation drop offs will be accepted through **August 31st**, and can be made Monday - Friday from 8am to 5pm at The Skills Center (1301 N. Blvd. Tampa, FL 33606) or Tampa Bay Wave (500 E. Kennedy Blvd, Suite 300, Tampa, 33602).

For more details on this initiative, check out <https://www.tampabaywave.org/wavecares/>.

For donation-related questions, please contact info@esmartrecycling.com.

TSC IN THE NEWS

TAMPA BAY BUSINESS JOURNAL

CELESTE ROBERTS NAMED TO LEADERSHIP TAMPA CLASS OF 2022

The program will begin August 30, a quick turnaround after the class of 2021 graduation in June



*Celeste Roberts, co-founder
& CEO of The Skills Center*

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Wave Cares

Laptops for Kids Back-to-School Laptop Drive

For the month of August, donate your devices and receive a **FREE** day pass!



GET TO KNOW: CHRIS WARD

Role at TSC: Co-Founder & Program Director Hometown: Bradenton, FL

Chris Ward is one of the co-founders of The Skills Center, a role that for him is about much more than just work. To him, it's about passion and purpose.

Chris's passion for sports, particularly basketball, started at a young age. He played throughout his childhood, was a standout player at Bradenton Southeast, and eventually played professionally in Europe for several years. His storied career in the game also goes far beyond the court. Chris coached at IMG Academy, St. Leo and Hillsborough Community College, before coaching the champion boys' basketball team at Hillsborough High School in Tampa. In fact, he was even named Hillsborough County Coach of the Year twice during his tenure there.

Concurrently, Chris's purpose of helping others also began at a young age. His father was responsible for running all juvenile detention centers in Sarasota County, and would bring Chris and his younger brother to play with the children at the facilities. Chris says he learned to never judge someone



based on the mistakes they made – a critical life lesson he says he holds as his standard in co-founding and coaching at The Skills Center each and every day.

Chris loves working with kids, mentoring them, and playing a significant role in their lives. The Skills Center isn't just a name – what's behind it is his unwavering passion and purpose of fueling a greater impact through sports in the local Tampa Bay community.



WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF WORKING WITH TSC?

Watching a kid come in, trusting the process, going through it, and seeing them at a later time when they are both positive and productive.

WHAT'S BEEN A DEFINING MOMENT FOR YOU SINCE CO-FOUNDING TSC?

There have been so many, but when my son said to me, "I want to be like you when I grow up, you respect and are good to everyone," it was life changing. As a kid, he would always ask me why I always talk to everyone and I told him, "You never know what kind of day that person had." For him to tell me this years later as an adult was like coming full circle.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST LESSON YOU HOPE STUDENTS WILL LEARN FROM YOU?

Being honest, being consistent, and treating everyone the same. It's what you put into a child's mind that's going to have the greatest impact on their mindset and how they develop.

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU'VE HEARD FROM A STUDENT THAT POSITIVELY IMPACTED YOU?

Kids get back in touch to thank us all the time. But one kid wrote a note from prison thanking us. He said it took the incident which got him there to fully understand what we were trying to teach him.

WHAT IS A FUN FACT ABOUT YOU?

I love to travel, and would love to do what I do for free in every country (or at least in as many different places as possible).