

Building A World Where Opportunity Is Universal And Potential Is Limitless

An Interview with Cyndi Court, Chief Executive Officer, TGR Foundation

EDITORS' NOTE *Cyndi Court joined TGR Foundation with more than 25 years of executive experience in several national education-based organizations focused on serving young people from under-resourced communities. In her role as CEO, she has executive responsibility for all aspects of the Foundation's programs and outreach, including the flagship TGR Learning Lab in Anaheim and future TGR Learning Labs at Lulu's Place in Los Angeles and at Cobbs Creek in Philadelphia. Prior to joining TGR Foundation, Court was the Chief Development Officer at Berry College in Atlanta where she oversaw all development, philanthropic communications, alumni engagement and a comprehensive capital campaign which included the renovation and construction of new academic facilities. She also created and endowed a scholarship program for students experiencing challenging circumstances including significant financial need and created opportunities for diverse students in STEM with corporate partners. Prior to Berry College, Court served as the chief marketing and development officer of Special Olympics International and executive vice president, resource development and marketing, at Boys & Girls Clubs of America. During her time with Boys & Girls Club of America, she worked with Major League Baseball and Henry and Billye Aaron to endow the Hank Aaron Chasing the Dream Foundation program for youth.*



Cyndi Court

ORGANIZATION BRIEF *For more than 25 years, TGR Foundation (tgrfoundation.org) has worked to create a world where opportunity is universal and potential is limitless. With an unwavering commitment to impact youth from under-resourced communities, its mission is to empower students to pursue their passions through education. TGR Foundation helps students connect their passions with purpose through signature programs focused on in-person project-based learning, skills development, college access, career preparation and educator professional development.*

How do you define TGR Foundation's mission?

TGR Foundation exists to empower students to pursue their passions through

education. We achieve our mission through the TGR Learning Lab and through our national programs, which provide students opportunities to discover their interests and unlock their potential.

We help our young students find their passions through our educational programs and expose them to relevant careers that would allow them to get paid for doing something they love. This excites them about learning, motivates them to remain committed to their schooling, and better positions them to make their aspirations a reality.

What excited you about the opportunity to lead TGR Foundation and made you feel it was the right fit?

This is a pivotal moment for TGR Foundation. We are building on the impact we have made in Anaheim, California through the TGR Learning Lab and opening new TGR Learning Labs in Philadelphia and Los Angeles in 2025 and 2026, respectively. I am both excited and honored to be leading the expansion efforts because we will soon be impacting thousands

more youth from under-resourced communities – all of whom deserve equitable access to educational opportunities and resources.

During the last 25 years, I have held executive roles at several national education-based organizations focused on serving young people from under-resourced communities. I have led youth development and education initiatives, marketing campaigns and national, regional, and local fundraising efforts. This experience will be a great asset as TGR Foundation expands its geographic footprint and program portfolio.

Will you provide an overview of the work of TGR Foundation and highlight its initiatives?

For more than 17 years, TGR Foundation has provided experiential learning programs focused on educational enrichment, health and well-being development, college access, and career readiness to young people from under-resourced communities. TGR Foundation also operates the Earl Woods Scholar Program, a comprehensive college scholarship and mentorship program, and professional learning programs for educators.



Members of the Earl Woods Scholar Class of 2023 represent their universities during the program's annual Winter Workshop

“When I was a kid, my parents taught me the importance of sharing and caring and instilled a simple principle in my life: try to make an impact in one person’s life, every day. At TGR Foundation, we are doing just that, making a meaningful impact on the lives of youth one day at a time.”

Tiger Woods, Founder, TGR Foundation



Tiger Woods connects with his mentee, Sammy Mohammed, a TGR Learning Lab & Earl Woods Scholar

In 2006, TGR Foundation opened the 35,000 square foot TGR Learning Lab in Anaheim, California, a safe and inspiring educational space for students to discover their interests, develop their aptitudes and unlock their potential. The TGR Learning Lab offers programming during the academic year and the summer tailored to uplift and empower fifth through twelfth grade students from surrounding communities.

TGR Learning Lab programs supplement traditional primary and secondary schooling by offering hands-on classes and activities that spark an excitement for learning. They also allow youth to explore a wide range of subjects that broaden their interests and their understanding of professional opportunities that are attainable if they remain committed to their education.

Our programs also foster social-emotional learning in young people and instill in them the importance of physical and mental health and well-being. Students are empowered by our team of dedicated educators to discover their inherent value and individual potential. This holistic support breaks down systemic expectations and helps youth develop confidence and self-awareness. Our programs aim to prepare youth to achieve their professional aspirations through career-connected learning

opportunities, post-secondary education (college, certification programs, trade programs, etc.), advisement and essential life skills development. Connecting learning to future opportunities motivates youth to graduate high school, complete post-secondary education and pursue meaningful work in industries aligned with their passions.

How critical are metrics to measure the impact of the Foundation’s work?

Metrics are critical to our operations; they measure the effectiveness of our existing programs, guide the development of new offerings, and allow us to convey our impact.

Young people are our “customers” and meeting their needs is vital to retaining them year after year, which leads to more transformational impact. We survey each student after they complete a program to understand what is working and what can be improved. During the last academic year, 77 percent of students who participated in TGR Learning Lab after-school classes reported being more aware of careers aligned with their interests and 70 percent expressed that they felt more motivated to achieve their goals.



TGR Learning Lab students collaborate on coding activities during an after-school class

“This is an exciting time for TGR Foundation. Cyndi’s leadership will deepen our impact on the students and communities we serve through our TGR Learning Lab in Anaheim and our future TGR Learning Labs in Philadelphia and Los Angeles.”

Tiger Woods, Founder, TGR Foundation

After the TGR Learning Lab in Anaheim resumed in-person programming following the COVID pandemic, analysis of our data indicated that we had an opportunity to increase the number of high school students we serve annually. This fall, we introduced two new career-connected learning programs designed specifically for teenagers, a demographic typically harder to reach due to the wide range of activities that vie for their attention. Ninety-three percent of participants in our first “Industry Academy,” which was focused on community health, reported having a deeper understanding of career options in the medical industry and 89 percent felt more equipped to achieve their career goals.

In anticipation of opening TGR Learning Labs in Philadelphia and Los Angeles, we are conducting community assessments to ensure the programs we will offer meet the specific needs of students and the surrounding communities. For example, only 6 percent of the nearly 20,000 students at the Philadelphia public schools located within a three-mile radius of the future TGR Learning Lab achieved proficiency in mathematics on the Pennsylvania Systems of School Assessment. We have already begun addressing the significant need for tutoring in West Philadelphia through programs at local schools.

Will you discuss Tiger Woods’ passion and commitment for the work of TGR Foundation and how engaged he is in its efforts?

TGR Foundation was created to expand the Woods’ family legacy of sharing and caring. Education always came first in the Woods household and after the tragedy of 9/11, Tiger told his father, Earl, that he wanted to create “a safe space for kids to learn, grow and chase after their dreams.” This passion led him to build the TGR Learning Lab Anaheim.

As the founder of TGR Foundation and a member of our Board of Governors, Tiger is actively involved with our strategic direction. The quality of our educational programming and the impact we are having on each individual life are his top priorities. Tiger leads by example. He served as a mentor for Sammy Mohammed through our Earl Woods Scholar Program, which was created to honor the legacy of Tiger’s late father. The two have a very special bond. Sammy, who comes from an immigrant household, was first exposed to the TGR Learning Lab on a school field trip as a fifth-grade student. He continued participating in our expanded learning programs through high school, working towards his dream of going to college, and then he was selected to be an Earl Woods Scholar. He is now an engineer at Google.

Did you always know that you had a passion for this type of work and what makes the work so special for you?

Empowering young people is my personal passion, especially through education. As a first-generation college graduate, I see very clearly the power of education. Without the mentorship and support I received during school, my life path would have been completely different. That is why I am here at TGR Foundation. Young people from under-resourced communities have just as much potential as their more privileged peers; they often just lack opportunities due to systemic inequities. Our programs help these youth unlock their unique talents and achieve their aspirations. Our students go on to become positive agents of change within their families and communities.

What are your priorities for TGR Foundation as you look to the future?

The future of TGR Foundation is incredibly bright. As I mentioned earlier, this is a pivotal time for the organization. We are enhancing our educational offerings to serve a wider age range of young people in a deeper, more meaningful way, while also expanding geographically to significantly increase our reach and impact. However, achieving these priorities will require more annual fundraising revenue and more partnerships with industry leaders who can provide unique career-connected learning opportunities and real-world work experiences for the young people we serve.

Every day, there are students being left behind at schools across the country; the achievement gap and opportunity gap for young people in under-resourced communities continues to widen. Securing more mission-aligned donors will allow us to empower more of these youth to pursue their passions through education and to conduct feasibility studies to determine the communities that need TGR Learning Labs the most. Our expansion to Philadelphia and Los Angeles is only the beginning.

We are also seeking national, regional, and local partnerships with mission-aligned corporations, companies and not-for-profit institutions. There are ample ways to support TGR Foundation and the young people we serve including program and scholarship sponsorships, paid internships and volunteer opportunities, such as mentoring, for industry professionals.

Invested donors and partners will allow us to achieve our vision: a world where opportunity is universal and potential is limitless. ●



Students enter the TGR Learning Lab in Anaheim, California for after-school programs