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THE INSTITUTE FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP SHINES SPOTLIGHT ON FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR LEADING PANDEMIC RECOVERY EFFORTS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Woman of Color-Led Athletic Arts Academy NJ LLC Springs Forward To Provide A Helping Hand To Hard-Working Parents With A Place For Their Children To Excel

Newark, NJ, August 9, 2021 — Propelled forward by a Summer Youth Camp Financial Assistance grant from the State of New Jersey, the [Athletic Arts Academy](#), located in Orange, N.J., is engaging young hearts, minds and bodies. The academy is helping working families to recover from the devastating financial effects of the pandemic. “Families need a safe, dependable and affordable place for their children. The past year has put a terrible strain on working families in surrounding, predominantly African-American, Latin, and immigrant communities, where family members often work multiple jobs. Receiving this grant has enabled the academy to offer parents much-needed financial relief,” stated IyaSokoya Karade, CEO and Owner of Athletic Arts Academy and the A3 Gymnastics Child Care Center.

The 10,500 square-foot youth gymnastics and sports academy also operates a summer youth camp providing additional physical fitness activities and classes like roller skating instruction; introductions to fencing, American Sign Language, hand tools & basic construction, and entrepreneurship; art & photography, and hand & machine sewing. Through the grant, Athletic Arts Academy was not only able to stay operational, but to make small but important upgrades to the facility, purchase furnishings for the summer camp program, and hire additional staff. Most importantly, families not eligible for state child care subsidies receive reimbursement for the out-of-pocket expense of summer camp through the grant. This is especially important for low-to-moderate income communities where resources are strained.

Karade explained that her journey as an entrepreneur is full of challenges, which were amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. She cites the capacity-building assistance she received from the [Institute For Entrepreneurial Leadership](#) (IFEL) through the [Women of Color Connecting](#) (WOCCON) initiative in which a ‘Success Circles’ team was the catalyst to help save the academy. “Building this business from the ground up has taken a toll on me. Joining WOCCON and a Success Circles team was an immediate turning point for me. The influential network I

was able to build, the allies, supporters and professionals all had a hand in my success,” Karade noted.

IFEL CEO & Founder Jill Johnson states, “Entrepreneurs like IyaSokoya Karade and the Athletic Arts Academy are exactly what’s needed to move the needle toward communal recovery. She has chosen to dedicate hard-earned resources where they are needed the most and to help propel generations of youth forward to productive and successful lives. Her programs promote intellectual, creative, and emotional agility to help build strong, balanced leadership skills necessary for the children in our communities to succeed.”

Karade concluded, “Parents also need to move forward with their lives post-pandemic. Having access to a place that follows safety guidelines required by the State along with age-appropriate, structured time is essential as children and families ready themselves to return to the classroom in the Fall. Going back into the school building will undoubtedly be very different in the age of Covid-19 and developing variants. Young students need practice conducting themselves safely in group settings. They desire opportunities to explore, think, learn, move and engage. These are huge steps toward recovery,” Karade added.

ABOUT COACH IYA

Coach IyaSokoya Karade is the Owner and CEO of the Athletic Arts Academy, NJ LLC and the A3 Gymnastics Child Care Center LLC. She is the NJ District Sports Director for Gymnastics for the Amateur Athletics Union (AAU), a certified Professional Member and certified National Coach of USA Gymnastics Organization (USAG), a Meet Director, and a member of the National Association of Women's Gymnastics Judges (NAWGJ). Her mission is to create community leaders through the discipline and joy of gymnastics. Her program is designed to help children not only gain physical strength and ability, but also learn the fundamentals they need to succeed as leaders in school, in communities, and in life. Once a youth athlete herself, Coach Iya understands how a well-rounded, athletic experience can positively impact a person's life.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP

Founded in 2002, the [Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership](https://www.weareifel.org) (IFEL) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that supports economic development through entrepreneurship. We are experts in creating and implementing small business programming in support of larger economic development objectives. Our mission is to eradicate the systemic barriers that prevent entrepreneurs of color from being able to access the knowledge, networks, and capital required for business success. Visit us at <https://www.weareifel.org>.

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