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**Urban League of Greater Chattanooga announces 2024 NextLevel**

 **Business Accelerator cohort**

**CHATTANOOGA, TENN. (DATE) –** Now in its ninth year,the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga has announced its 2024 cohort for the NextLevel Business Accelerator program. The program begins this March and will be completed over the next eight months. By the end of the program, participants will have a customized three-year growth plan, vetted by peers and business experts, that fits their individual business needs.

“Our program is designed for businesses that are already at the growth stage and have been in business for more than two years with a solid customer base,” said Lya Kimbrough, senior director for the Urban League’s Center for Economic and African American Business Success. “NextLevel is more than a program, it’s a long-term commitment to a journey of empowering local business leaders to thrive.”

NextLevel aims to prepare local minority business owners with the tools necessary to succeed in the ever-changing business landscape. This interactive accelerator uses Interise’s StreetWise “MBA” curriculum, coupled with guest experts, coaching and cohort-led mastermind mentoring groups, aimed to provide mutual support and accountability. With an emphasis on community, the program fosters collaborative learning, not only during the sessions but also beyond program completion.

“We have witnessed the transformative impact this initiative has had on business owners who have committed to the implementation of their business growth plans that were developed as a part of our strategic guidance and expert insights. Many go on prepared to access greater amounts of capital and an expanded customer base for desired profitability. This program is dedicated to fostering a legacy of prosperity and economic inclusion in our community,” said Candy Johnson, president and CEO of the Urban League.

According to one NextLevel program alumna Jennifer Hoff, who graduated in 2015 and is the owner of Skye Strategies, her experience impacted her company significantly.

“After completing the NextLevel program my company doubled its revenue within the first year after and has experienced on average 30% growth every year,” said Hoff.

This year, 11 business owners were selected to participate in the program:

* Antonio Tate, Party Bites Catering
* Stacy Martin, Seahorse Snacks
* Montrell Besley, Rolling Video Games
* Jenna Wright, Southern Soul Yoga
* Antonio Hickman, Humanitees Print and Design
* LaShon Carter, Tiny Tigers Learning Center
* Shaun Teague, Cue the Champagne
* Marc Anthony Pierre, The MAX Experience Barbershop
* Kenyatta Ashford, Neutral Ground
* Cassandra Tucker, Divine Purity Aurapothecary, LLC
* Luis Contreras, The Local Juicery

Due to the generous support of TVA and The Benwood Foundation, the Urban League can offer this comprehensive business development program to improve outcomes for disadvantaged business owners without posing a financial burden to owners.

For more information about ULGC, visit [www.ulchatt.net](http://www.ulchatt.net/) or call 423-756-1762.

 **About Urban League of Greater Chattanooga**The Urban League of Greater Chattanooga is an affiliate of the National Urban League, the nation's oldest and largest community-based movement devoted to empowering African Americans and other underserved individuals to enter the economic and social mainstream. Since 1982, the Chattanooga affiliate has served many thousands of economically disadvantaged persons, individuals representing communities of color, and minority-owned businesses through programs and initiatives that promote educational attainment, economic development, self-sufficiency, and inclusive leadership opportunities.

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