

Infinite Potential Learning Center Utilizes the Florida SBDC at PCED to Develop and Grow



Sometimes, the ideal business concept springs from life's challenges. Frustrated by watching students struggle to read, former elementary school teacher Twanna Monroe was motivated to form a non-profit program to build skills in young readers, to better prepare them to enter the elementary grades. Monroe sought the assistance of the **Florida Small Business Development Center (FSBDC) at Pinellas County Economic Development (PCED)** and, working with Center Director Dr. Cynthia Johnson, soon realized her business model was a better fit as a for-profit enterprise.

"I didn't know what to do," explains Monroe. "I didn't know who to seek out to help with financial planning, to help get a business started from the ground up."

Acting on a suggestion from her husband (also a client of the FSBDC at PCED), Monroe contacted Dr. Johnson and found in her both an ally and business mentor.

"I am a life-long educator," says Johnson, "and I'd been a reading specialist, so when Twanna came and wanted to exit the school system and start her own business...I understood. She had the passion and I had the business acumen to share with her to get her business going."

Their first step was to prepare a business assessment during an initial consultation. That would serve as a guideline to plan future steps.

"Dr. Johnson actually took the time to sit down with me, tell me what a true business plan was, and the steps I needed to take in order to present the concept to any financial institution," Monroe says.

As Monroe developed her business plan through one-on-one consultation through the FSBDC, she added to her skills by participating in **business workshops** held

by the FSBDC. The FSBDC at PCED regularly offers a variety of training workshops to help owners and staff of new and growing businesses. After participating in workshops on topics such as marketing and QuickBooks, Monroe had the skills necessary to build a robust business from her plan. Infinite Potential now has five classrooms and serves infants to four-year-olds with a focus on developing a love for literacy. Over four years, Monroe has grown her staff from two to 10 employees.

With a waiting list for new enrollees, Infinite Potential is poised for further growth in the future, and Monroe intends to continue utilizing the support and knowledge of the FSBDC as she plans for her company's future.

"I hope to expand shortly, so I've been collaborating with the FSBDC to find the finances to expand the business as well as franchise in the near future," she says.

That ongoing relationship with Infinite Potential Learning Center is the kind Johnson strives for with clients.

"At the Florida SBDC, we deploy an economic development approach to local business assistance. It's not about size," she explains. "It's not about industry-only. It's about retention. We want to help you get in business so you can stay in business. Twanna has done all the right things to build a solid foundation for her business. As a local employer, job creation is the true sense of economic development, and it's businesses like this one that create economic growth in our communities."

Explore Infinite Potential and its success at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Infinite-Potential-Learning-Center/191435467609356>.

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