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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2017

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**CAMP ‘TREPPIE IS FIRST TO COMBINE LEADERSHIP, MONEY
MANAGEMENT and ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING for
TEENS in BIG BEND**

*Minority Chamber Partners with Local Credit Union to Host
New Business Camp for Youth Entrepreneurs*

[TALLAHASSEE] As the school year comes to a close, many parents are once again facing the age-old question of what to do with their children during the summer months. Thankfully, in Tallahassee, there are plenty of summer camps to choose from. But for that mom or dad looking for something new and innovative for their teenager, **Camp ‘Treppie** may be just the answer.

On June 19, the Big Bend Minority Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Tallahassee-Leon Federal Credit Union will unveil a new concept in summer day camps. Touted as the first of its kind in the Big Bend region, **Camp ‘Treppie** will run from June 19-23 on the Tallahassee Community College main campus. It is a five-day summer camp for teenagers (ages 13-18) that effectively combines leadership, entrepreneurship and money management.

For the budding youth entrepreneur interested in starting their own business, working for a start-up, or developing a new product idea, there’s a new summer camp in town that will help them move their ideas forward while also teaching them the basic tenets of a leader’s mindset, and the important tools for financial acumen. **Camp ‘Treppie** celebrates diversity and invites teenagers (ages 13-18) from all backgrounds to apply.

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"We recognize entrepreneurship as a viable option for young people as they begin to think about what they will do with their lives," says Sean Pittman, founder and board chair of the Big Bend Minority Chamber of Commerce. "But we also believe the best entrepreneurs possess strong leadership skills that reflect character, citizenship and accountability." Pittman went on to say the BBMC's summer camp will encourage youth to embrace both of these concepts now if they intend to be at the top of their game in the future.

The Big Bend Minority Chamber of Commerce Youth Entrepreneurs Council (YEC) was formed for the specific purpose of encouraging and supporting young people who want to explore the world of entrepreneurship. **Camp "Treppie** ("treppies" are young entrepreneurs!) is the YEC's annual event and represents a partnership between the BBMC and the Tallahassee-Leon Federal Credit Union (TLFCU). As title sponsor and project partner, the TLFCU will provide instruction and facilitation of the daily curriculum.

"We have a passion for financial education, and we see this partnership as a great way to further engage young people in establishing a strong understanding of financial principles" said Lisa Brown, President/CEO of Tallahassee-Leon Federal Credit Union. "We have seen firsthand the impact engaging young people can have on our community, and look forward to the ideas these bright young folks are going to come up with as a result of our collaboration."

A little over two years ago, two writers for the Wall Street Journal noted the decline in the number of people under 30 who own their own businesses. The reasons for this downward trend range from risk-aversion in young people to the inability to raise capital; from lack of skills and experience to barriers to entry. Perhaps experiences like **Camp "Treppie** will reverse the direction of these trends for local youth.

The camp curriculum is a thoughtful combination of award-winning BIZ KID\$ lesson plans, leadership lessons from Kaufman's Entrepreneurial Learning Institute, and the successful financial management tools developed for the Mini Billionaires Academy (MBA). Camp facilitators include the senior management team from the Tallahassee-Leon Federal Credit Union, local leaders in the entrepreneurial sector, and trained and vetted volunteers. The tuition is \$199 and covers all camp materials, supplies, daily snacks, and a completion packet. A limited number of scholarships are available.

"**Camp "Treppie** potentially addresses a host of issues and concerns," says Gina Kinchlow, a marketing professional who also sits on the board of directors for the Big Bend Minority Chamber of Commerce. "The research shows us that successful entrepreneurs need business savvy, an understanding of money, and leadership skills; three things that are rarely taught in tandem to youth interested in business ownership." Kinchlow explains that the Big Bend region needs the fresh ideas that come from young entrepreneurs, but also needs the jobs created by new business startups. "Most importantly," says Kinchlow, "we've got to find ways to keep young people in this community." She says maybe, just maybe, **Camp "Treppie** is the pipeline needed to make this happen.

Interested parents should visit the BBMC website at www.mybbmc.org to download the camp overview, the application, and policies/procedures. The application deadline is June 9 and payment is expected at the time of application submission. Parents may also e-mail CampDirector@mybbmc.org to request the information and ask questions.

The Big Bend Minority Chamber of Commerce was organized in November of 2012 in response to the looming gap in economic opportunities for minority-owned and woman-owned businesses in Tallahassee and the four contiguous counties. With a mission to stimulate grassroots economic growth and development for minority-owned and women-owned business enterprises, the BBMC has a three-point strategy that collectively addresses key areas of need: advocacy, education and business/professional network integration.

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