

OC LEADER BOARD

Opinion, Analysis, Insight

How TGR Learning Lab Anaheim Helped 210K Students in 20 Years

By Mike McKee

Long-term impact doesn't happen by accident; it requires an unwavering commitment, adaptive leadership and an engaged board of governors.

TGR Foundation is celebrating 20 years of empowering students in Orange County through hands-on educational programs, available at no cost to local students at the **TGR Learning Lab** in Anaheim.

Since opening in 2006, the Learning Lab has served more than 210,000 students through school-day field trips, after-school classes, weekend workshops and summer learning experiences. Its programs provide opportunities and experiences that help students discover their passions, gain holistic support, build transferable skills and graduate with a plan for their future.

Sustained Leadership and Impact

When **Tiger Woods** decided to expand the Foundation's focus from golf clinics and character development to education in 2001, I was asked to support his vision to open a safe, inspiring space for students in his hometown to "learn, grow and chase after their dreams."

At that time, as vice chairman of the **Irvine Company**, one of the largest privately owned real estate companies in the country, I worked closely with the Foundation's leadership to get the Lab designed, funded and built. Shortly after, Tiger asked me to join his Board. I felt very blessed to be involved, and my experience prepared me well to become chairman of the board several years later.

Board leadership isn't just about governance compliance; it's a strategic resource to guide resilience and growth in a fast-changing world.

Prior to joining the Irvine Co., my legal career at **Latham & Watkins** was built around supporting public and private companies as they formed their governance, financed their business and developed their vision and strategy. This experience was also useful as the activities of the Foundation expanded.

In the 20 years the TGR Learning Lab has been open, the national workforce participation trends have declined with challenges of skill misalignment and gaps in access, training and infrastructure.

Education to Workforce Pipeline

The TGR Learning Lab's innovative programming has provided a solution through STEAM educational enrichment and career and

college readiness. When students are able to align their education with their interests and have fun while learning, they're more prepared for the workforce and excited to enter it.

When the Lab opened, programs focused almost exclusively on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Today, we've integrated the arts more intentionally in an updated space, including a multimedia hub featuring a podcast studio and the latest technology. We offer classes in more than 30 subjects that expose students to high-demand careers and give them opportunities to learn about work, through work and at work including:

Cybersecurity	Robotics
Biomedical Careers	Game Design Fundamentals
Video Production	Beginner UAV Drones
Comparative Vertebrate Zoology	Artificial Intelligence

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and national labor reports, demand for skills and candidates frequently outpaces availability, with emphasis on health care, finance and STEM.

Significant investment in education and training is needed to close skills gaps, and our education programs prove it's never too early to get started. Our career readiness integrations begin as early as 5th grade, and our curriculum has evolved along with partnerships and opportunities.



Mike McKee
Chairman
TGR Foundation
Board of Governors

Power of Education

Instilled as a core value by his parents, Tiger understands the power of education. His vision has led to transformative change in the lives of students and the community. The safe and supportive environment of the

Learning Lab has developed a shared experience among the students served. They all feel like it's a special place, and it's often referred to as a second home. The facility is bright, colorful and equipped with caring educators, technology and opportunities to meet the needs of students and the workforce.

The pipeline to thriving careers begins with education, but we wouldn't be able to build it without the partnership and synergistic relationships with local school districts. The superintendents and principals become partners in our work, and we're able to provide students with enrichment that complements their school program-

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ming. The fact that we've been able to develop a bridge alongside the local school districts that is mutually beneficial is unique.

Board Leadership

We lead a collaborative approach to our programming, beginning at the board level through a diverse group of professionals with the credibility and commitment needed to drive our impact in Orange County and beyond. It's given us access to equipment, intellectual property and resources that have been very valuable in developing the programs and opportunities we offer students.

The Board is intentional about surrounding the organization with people who have creative ideas, passion for what we're doing and professional integrity. We have a wide spectrum of experience and talent. We want people who are committed, engaged and actively contribute to our mission, and we've got that.

With core responsibilities for strategic guidance, protection of the mission, outcome of accountability and financial sustainability, the board is grounded by deep commitment and leadership from Tiger. His Foundation is a lifelong commitment. It's a core pillar in terms of what he wants his legacy to be.

His leadership and involvement provide the foundation with a deep and sophisticated platform to impact lives.

From the very beginning, when I was asked to join the board, I had a feeling it could be pretty special. More than 20 years later, having helped develop something that is thriving and expanding is personally fulfilling.

Impact and Expansion

New projects in Los Angeles and Philadelphia are already driving



Students outside the TGR Learning Lab

impact, and we're being approached by other partners for expansion into new cities across the country. It makes me feel proud to be able to work closely with Tiger and the other members of the Board and keep dreaming about what's next.

I always enjoyed my professional life, but I also felt it was important to find time to give back. And for me, this has been one of the primary vehicles that gives me that opportunity.

When impact is visible, commitment follows. Seeing real student outcomes year after year and watching alumni progress through education and careers has inspired the community and built on the Woods family legacy with a lasting ROI.

Students from local communities of need like **Alma Gutierrez** and **Sammy Mohammed** are prime examples of the impact of education and why engagement is important at every level. Alma didn't believe college was an option before joining the TGR Learning Lab; now she holds a master's degree from **California State Polytechnic University, Pomona**. Sammy began participating through a fifth-grade field trip that led him to be an active member throughout high school. He was later accepted into the **Earl Woods Scholar Program** and gained ongoing support on his path to becoming a **Stanford** graduate and **Google** engineer.

The real measure of leadership isn't how quickly something launches; it's how well it lasts and continues to serve. As the TGR Learning Lab begins its next 20 years of impact and TGR Foundation celebrates its 30th anniversary, we look forward to working with the Orange County community to prepare more students for thriving lives and careers.