



SAY HELLO TO GALA 2019 KEYNOTE SPEAKER TIM TEBOW!

We are tremendously excited to host Tim Tebow as keynote speaker at our 2019 Gala, to be held on September 28 at 6:00 p.m. (Tickets are still available on our website: www.vcsyracuse.com. All proceeds from the event directly benefit Mercy Works at the Jordan Vision Center.)

Of course, most people know Tim for his remarkable career as a standout college quarterback who won the Heisman Trophy (2007) while playing for the Florida Gators. Or for his time in the NFL, playing first for the Denver Broncos and then for the New York Jets, New England Patriots, and Philadelphia Eagles. Or having successfully changed to professional baseball, where he's now an outfielder for the Syracuse Mets!

Yet, what really captured the imagination of the Mercy Works team was Tim's commitment to helping others, his belief in philanthropy, and his unyielding and unashamed faith. Born in the Philippines to Christian missionary parents, he has retained and remained devoted to his faith throughout his childhood in Jacksonville, FL, his college years at the University of Florida, and his storied career in professional sports. Tim's doggedly positive attitude seemed a perfect

megaphone for helping us amplify the key messages of resilience and empowerment so fundamental to the programming at the Jordan Vision Center.

"We're honored Tim immediately saw, appreciated, and can readily relate to all we're doing at the center," says Mercy Works board member and gala chair, Gary Crisalli, president of G.M. Crisalli & Associates. "His key messages of setting personal goals and having an abiding faith in oneself, one's community, and a higher power are so well-aligned with ours that having him take the stage at our gala was a no-brainer."

In advance of our gala – where those lucky enough to attend will have the pleasure of hearing Tim speak at length – we thought we'd share a few quotes from Tim. Enjoy – and see you in September! (Continues on pg 3)

Join us at the 2nd Annual Mercy Works Gala:

To be held on Saturday, September 28, 2019. We are pleased to welcome former NFL star and minor league baseball star Tim Tebow as our keynote speaker. Enjoy cocktails, dinner, inspiring stories, and silent auctions – followed by dancing and live entertainment! Proceeds will support our life-changing programming, focused on helping under-served, Syracuse-area youth reach their full potential!

transformation

Synergy 2019 recap: Another successful year and great group of graduates!

Another year has gone by and with it, we say so long and good luck to a tremendous group of inspiring and well-prepared Synergy participants! As you likely know, Synergy is our largest, most ambitious, and most expensive program and is focused on placing 50 self-motivated college undergrads in paid internships at local companies across Syracuse. In these 10-week positions, participants realize a host of benefits, including:



- Gaining exposure to real workplaces
- Acquiring hands-on and real-world experience in their fields of interest
- Stretching as individuals, through community service, professional development, work-life balance coaching, and financial management concepts designed to reduce debt and build a strong financial portfolio



2018-2019 Synergy Highlights/Outcomes:

- 52 out of 64 applicants accepted and placed in internship experiences within 21 partner worksites
- 48 student participants, representing 21 colleges across NYS, pursuing 26 majors and fields of study, are scheduled to successfully graduate from Synergy this summer
- 20 mentors from sponsor companies provided professional wisdom in career and academic goals
- 1 "Power Friday!" experience that included a mentor and a meal during their 10-week program

Looking to 2019-2020:

We have a good start, but help is still needed!

Securing and coordinating Synergy internships – and aligning them with our applicants – is a formidable lift, in and of itself. More challenging still is the money we need to raise in order to fund these paid internships on our host employers' behalf. Fortunately, we've got a great list of over 20 corporate supporters who provide mentors and internship opportunities, and we receive grants to help fund the program's \$4,125 per-student stipends, meals, and workplace experiences. In fact, at present, we have been blessed to receive grants from these amazingly generous sponsors to get close to our current goal of \$50,000 – which, in turn, will trigger a matching \$50,000 grant from an anonymous donor to get us to full funding for Synergy 2019-2020!

- \$13,000 – The Central New York Community Foundation
- \$10,000 – John Ben Snow Foundation
- \$25,000 – National Grid

Please help us get to the \$50,000 mark by supporting this vital program focused on giving underserved youth real-world work experience, a way into today's workforce, and the skills and self-esteem they need to be successful professionals and tomorrow's leaders!



CENTRAL NEW YORK
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



nationalgrid



Our new Apple computer lab is taking shape!

Thanks to an amazingly generous gift of \$25,000 from our good friend Gary Bell, we're continuing to make progress on our new Apple Computer Lab (aka: "Mac Lab") – to be equipped with 20-25 state-of-the-art Apple workstations. This facility, arranged in collaborative-style workstation clusters, will help our young clientele to learn and master a wide range of programs and skills enabled by Apple equipment and in high demand in today's workplaces, including: photography, graphic design, 3D modeling, computer-generated art, video production, music design, and drone operation skills among others. This new lab will feature a highly robust WiFi hub and internet connectivity, so our students can work fast and seamlessly without having to leave our safe, supportive campus to seek WiFi coverage at less secure locations elsewhere (e.g. fast food chains). Stay tuned for notice of our ribbon cutting for this unique lab!



Tebow (continued))

Tim Tebow speaks

"What God knows about us is more important than what others think."

"You never know how the tough times you are going through today will inspire someone else tomorrow."

"You know what I've learned in the process? How important it is not to allow either the highs or the lows in life to determine who you are."

"People have to realize that just because you're a Christian, it doesn't mean that you're perfect, because every once in a while everyone stumbles. Living by faith is about when you do mess up, get back up, brush yourself off, and keep trying to improve where you mess up or where you have temptation."

"I believe that everyone, regardless of who they are, should do something that is greater than themselves. Whether it's adoption, or helping people who are sick or poor, or whatever. That's what God put us on this earth to do."

"When we talk about having a life of significance and meaning, it's not about fame or money or resources. It's about people and lives and hearts. That's my biggest passion in life."

"When you try to be a role model, not everybody can relate to some of your highs - awards, championships. But everybody can relate to the lows. Everybody's gotten fired from a job or gotten cut. People learn more about you in those lows than they do in the highs."

Our Team

Gwen Battle,
Program Assistant

Veronica Giles,
Business Office Administrator

Joelle Harleston,
Development Director

Nati Torrence,
Program Director

Our Board

Pastor John Carter
Pastor Lisa Carter
Theresa Morgan
Addison Spears
Ed Thompson
Terry Bish
Mark Hall
Gary Crisalli
Jacqueline Coudriet
Kevin Duke

Donations

We take cars. Don't need your car? We can help!
Give through your estate. Remember us in your will and make a lasting impact.

Support card. Fill out the enclosed card and send your donation in the envelope.

Website. Go to vcsyracuse.com and click the Donate button.

United Way. If your employer participates in the United Way campaign, go to HR and fill out a form for the Donor Option Program, designating MercyWorks, Inc. as the recipient.

Smile.amazon.com Make online purchases through smile.amazon.com where 5% of your purchase will be donated to Mercy Works, Inc. when you designate your giving to our organization. Amazon.smile is the same as Amazon: Same products, same prices, and same service!



Three new improvements. One secure campus!

Thanks to an enormously generous gift of \$100,000 from Kevin Duke, we're all but done installing the security fencing, security cameras/surveillance, and enhanced parking lot lighting we mentioned in our January 2019 issue.

More than just functional and aesthetic improvements, we made a strategic investment in these improvements in order to make our campus a safer destination for our program participants, their families, our many volunteers, staff members, and other visitors. They also go far in protecting our facility itself and the increasingly impressive infrastructure inside, such as computer equipment, office supplies, furnishings, and other materials that make our programming a success.

Want to help us make the Clarence Jordan Vision Center a more functional and well-maintained community asset? We have an ongoing wish list for equipment, improvements, and volunteer opportunities. Just ask how you can pitch in or lend your support!