



## **Tia Coleman success story – Venture Leadership scholarship recipient**

*By Lorrie DeFrank*

To help in her quest to elevate other women and girls, Tia Coleman received a big boost from the Jacksonville Women’s Business Center (JWBC). She was granted a scholarship through its Launch an Entrepreneur campaign to take the six-week Venture Leadership workshop series that focuses on developing creative leadership skills in women business owners and female corporate employees of various sized ventures.

Coleman completed the sessions, which she said helped build her confidence as a leader and in growing her nonprofit, I Am the Prize, Inc. I Am the Prize helps girls and young women build self-esteem and acquire leadership skills they need to become entrepreneurs and

succeed in life. Over the past year, Coleman has grown her nonprofit from a one-women operation to a team of 12 and is developing an after-school program for middle- and high-school girls.

“It’s a new nonprofit but the work I’ve been doing is not new at all,” said Coleman, who has been visiting schools to give workshops on self-esteem and leadership. “Venture Leadership gave me confidence to delegate more, communicate more effectively with my team and strategize better with my team to come up with new ideas and implement them. They talked about innovative thinking, creating a winning work culture and sharing your stories to make an impact on others.”

The timing couldn’t have been better.

Coleman and her team are gearing up for the nonprofit’s third annual networking event called Manifesting over Mimosas that connects young women and entrepreneurs. To accommodate an anticipated attendance of more than three thousand—up from five hundred last year—it will be held in Jacksonville’s Prime Osborn Convention Center on Dec. 18. “It will be a huge celebration of success. This year’s theme is ‘You can have it all: love, wealth and mental health’ to teach people how to confidently navigate through life and entrepreneurship,” Coleman said. “Community leaders will tell their stories about how they overcame adversities and share resources for other people to grow their businesses.” Vendors will provide opportunities to support local businesses.

Coleman said preparation for team members includes making sure they are expanding their reach to a diverse audience and researching the market to ensure they are hitting their targets as far as what they are presenting this year.

If all that does not keep her busy enough, Coleman, age 28 and a graduate of Florida A&M University, also runs The Sweetest Sisters, a mobile gourmet shaved ice business that she started for her daughters. “I am really big on creating generational wealth and teaching responsibility at a young age,” said Coleman, quipping that Mackenzie, age six, takes orders and knows everything about the business, and Makayla, age two, bosses everyone around. “We call her the CEO,” she said of Mackenzie.

In addition to Venture Leadership, Coleman also uses skills she honed and tips she received through JAX Bridges, an entrepreneurial growth program of JAX Chamber. She had already launched I Am the Prize and The Sweetest Sisters by the time she attended sessions of Cohort 16 in spring 2022 and said JAX

Bridges helped her significantly, especially with marketing. “I learned how to pitch myself, how to talk about my business and how to build a better team by determining how each person contributed,” she said. “Both programs were amazing.”

Coleman said she takes every opportunity she gets to encourage other women considering becoming entrepreneurs to connect with JWBC to be inspired by other women and create collaborations.

Coleman is grateful for the opportunity to participate in Venture Leadership through the Jacksonville Women’s Business Center (JWBC). “It was really good to meet so many different women in different fields and be able to connect with them. I actually have collaborations coming up with a few of the women.”

*To contact Tia Coleman:*

I Am the Prize, Inc.

(904) 888-0091

info@iamtheprize.com

www.tiavsfancycash.com