



## **Jackee Ndwaru McGlamery Success Story, First Coast Aging in Place Solutions - 2023**

*By Lorrie DeFrank*

Jackee Ndwaru McGlamery, OTD/L, CCM, holds master's and doctorate degrees in occupational therapy and had worked in the field for more than a decade when she decided to start her own business.

“School prepared us to be great clinicians. But not business people,” she said, acknowledging an awakening. “It never prepared me for entrepreneurship and I found myself struggling and looking for resources. That’s when I discovered the Jacksonville Women’s Business Center. Almost immediately it felt like a good match for the needs I had.”

After living in Kansas during high school and college, she followed her family who had moved to Jacksonville, where the climate was more like that of their native Kenya. Ndwaru McGlamery worked mostly with the elderly, providing occupational therapy services in their homes and in rehabilitation facilities. Because only one in 10 homes are aging ready, she saw a need for a business that not only provided care but also worked with clients to make their environments safe and maximize their independence.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit about the same time, making that need even greater for people who had to stay in their own homes or with relatives for various reasons. Today, she is founder, CEO and sole proprietor of First Coast Aging in Place Solutions, a community-based occupational therapy private practice that serves clients where they live.

“Families could not see their loved ones in nursing homes and assisted living. This was a driving factor in starting my business,” she said. “As an occupational therapist with advanced expertise in home modification, I had the necessary skills to address this challenge.”

But transitioning from employee to entrepreneur presented challenges she had no idea existed.

Starting in the summer of 2020 she spent about a year acquiring the necessary licensing and documentation, including credentialing from Medicare. “I thought that’s what a business was,” she recalled. “Then I started seriously looking for support to be an entrepreneur.”

She did considerable research online and struck gold when she came across a JWBC table at a small business summit. “This is what I have been looking for!” she said.

Ndwaru McGlamery was impressed by its programming and immediately embarked on the JWBC Entrepreneurial Certificate Program. She was recognized at JWBC’s most recent Leadership Awards event for completing Venture Leadership, Legal Matters, Financial Matters and Marketing Matters.

“It was a really good supportive environment for a young entrepreneur,” she said. “I was still very, very new to business with a large learning gap. My networking, confidence and a lot of other things benefitted from being a part of that group.”

She said the whole program opened her eyes to what she needed to be successful, how holistic a business owner has to be, and how all the facets are equally important. No wonder she felt overwhelmed!

Specifically, she said Legal Matters significantly boosted her confidence in understanding the regulatory demands of her business and having the correct contracts. Financial Matters supplied other missing pieces. “I came up with a formalized blueprint of what my business should look like. I understood that this is a lifelong formal education process, a really good framework that I can follow,” she said.

Through that training, she learned of JAX Bridges, JAX Chamber’s entrepreneurial growth program for small businesses at all stages.

“That was the next thing my business needed because things that had been touched upon were now expounded on through the comprehensiveness of JAX Bridges—the additional skills that I didn’t know that I needed. Here was a pathway to achieve them.,” said Ndwaru McGlamery, who joined Cohort 18 in Spring 2023. “It’s a great program. It enhanced my public speaking skills, confidence to run a business, and ability to form partnerships and collaboration with peers in the same field.”

She said she has grown professionally from serving one client at a time to being more integrated into the healthcare aging ecosystem in Jacksonville and helping to solve problems at an organizational level. “My growth can be measured by the impact I can have in our community,” she said. For example, some of her work has merged into co-founding a nonprofit that will provide occupational therapy-led, low-cost home modifications to help underserved seniors in Jacksonville safely age in place.

“I feel like the support, collaboration and programming of the JWBC will contribute to help my business grow, and I look forward to sharing that,” Ndwaru McGlamery said.

*How to contact Jackee Ndwaru McGlamery:*

First Coast Aging in Place Solutions

(904) 832-1986

jackee@fcaips.com

firstcoastaginginplace.com

firstcoastsafeathomesolutions.com