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TOURISM CARES ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP TO INCREASE DIVERSITY IN GUIDED TOURS AND EXPERIENCES MARKET

The TreadRight Foundation, The Travel Corporation, TripSchool and the Media Arts Institute of Alabama join forces on the Pathways Project

Norwood, MA – August 18, 2021 – Tourism Cares has partnered with four industry-leading partners, [The TreadRight Foundation](#), [The Travel Corporation](#) (TTC), [TripSchool](#) and the [Media Arts Institute of Alabama](#) to develop a pathway of recruiting and training historically underrepresented individuals to pursue careers in travel and tourism, with a primary focus on tour guiding and directing. “We are committed to recruiting, training and mentoring Black, Indigenous and other underrepresented individuals and encouraging them to pursue careers in the group and escorted tourism industries,” said Leon Burnette, the founder of Media Arts Institute of Alabama, who is responsible for the vision of this program. “Their representation in travel preserves our nation’s diverse history and ensures our authentic stories and the nuances of the culture’s traditions, arts, and events that they know so well are shared.”

Tourism Cares, the industry non-profit with a mission to unite the travel industry and use its positive impact to help people and places thrive, will act as the administrator for this program. “The Pathways Project is a much-needed activation point for our industry, putting action in place in support of diversity, equity and inclusion”, said Greg Takehara, CEO of Tourism Cares. “It happens to coincide with a critical time in our industry in terms of addressing larger workforce challenges.”

Tour guides represent the frontline of the escorted and guided tour industry. They are the essential interface between the tour operator, the destination, and the guest, and critical to ensure representation is a part of a destination’s story. This workforce development initiative is designed to recruit, train and place individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds in positions as cultural heritage tour guides, tour directors, interpreters, and storytellers, creating a further pathway for advancement opportunities in the industry. Mitch Bach of TripSchool notes: “We train hundreds

of tour directors and guides through our various courses and keep hearing the same refrain – ‘I wish I had discovered this career sooner.’ Unlike other hospitality careers, tour directing & guiding takes you out into the world, free from bosses and offices, and lets you share your love of culture, history, and food with eager travelers. We're so pleased to be part of the Pathways Project to offer career training and mentorship to new, diverse communities."

"Meeting Leon Burnette last year and listening to him very openly explain why there were so few Black travel directors in the United States was a humbling moment," said Richard Launder, Director for The Travel Corporation USA and on behalf of its non-profit organization, The TreadRight Foundation. "Representation matters, and there is not enough of it in our industry. While this is true at all levels, it is especially so amongst our storytellers, guides, local specialists and travel directors, the faces of travel in this country. We are very proud to work with Leon and our other partners on the Pathways Project, an important step towards further change."

The Travel Corporation through its not-for-profit, The TreadRight Foundation has made an initial capital contribution to kickstart this program and is eager to welcome other tour operators to join in the effort in what needs to be an industry wide initiative.

The program will actively recruit communities underrepresented by the industry and selected applicants will be provided with online learning, active mentorship, and an in-person training boot camp. Upon graduation from the program, each participant will be poised for success and assisted with employment opportunities

The United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA) further announced its support of this critical initiative, citing the need to raise awareness, diversify the industry, and present opportunities for underserved communities.

For more information, please go to www.tourismpathways.com or direct your inquiry to grants@tourismcares.org.

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About Tourism Cares

Tourism Cares, Inc., a US 501(c)(3) nonprofit that advances the travel industry's positive impact to help people and places thrive. We believe it's in all our best interest to support the destinations our industry depends on so that communities, travelers and businesses can prosper. We mobilize the entire industry to use its business as a force for good by uniting, activating and inspiring all sectors to make a positive impact through travel. Learn more TourismCares.org and [@TourismCares](https://www.instagram.com/TourismCares).

About the TreadRight Foundation:

[TreadRight](#) is a joint not-for-profit initiative established by The Travel Corporation's (TTC) family of brands. TreadRight sets the direction on sustainability for 40 award-winning brands, in addition to overseeing our TreadRight Foundation. The organization's singular mission is to MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® through brand operations, and by providing support to community-based projects worldwide that safeguard the planet, people and wildlife. To date, the foundation has supported 60+ sustainable tourism projects in 280+ communities worldwide, based on priorities set by the TreadRight Steering Committee. Past project partners include

WWF, Conservation International, WildAid and The National Trust in the UK, while current initiatives include Green Bronx Machine, Manitobah Mukluks Storyboot School, Wilderness Foundation Africa and Wildlife SOS. TreadRight also works with inspiring ambassadors who have a passion for sustainable travel, to support its voice within the sustainable travel community. These ambassadors include Céline Cousteau ('Planet' Ambassador), Sarain Fox ('People' Ambassador), Ami Vitale ('Wildlife' Ambassador) and sustainable tourism expert, Costas Christ. To learn more about past and current work at TreadRight, please visit [TreadRight.org](https://www.treadright.org) and follow TreadRight on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) using our hashtag #MakeTravelMatter. We will make travel matter – for our planet, for people and for wildlife. We have taken the pledge, now we invite you to [join us](#).

About The Travel Corporation:

The Travel Corporation (TTC) is a highly successful, stable, and solvent family-owned and passionately run international group of 40 award-winning brands, which celebrated its first 100th Anniversary in 2020. Our exceptional portfolio of brands spans across 70 countries and offers an extensive selection of international travel and tourism companies, encompassing a variety of guided travel experiences, independent holiday packages, boutique river cruising, luxury hotels and safaris. We are committed to consistently delivering outstanding service, experiences, and value to each and every one of our guests and we do so through continuous innovation. Beyond our commitment to provide the world's leading holiday experiences, TTC reassures travellers in these uncertain times that their future travels are safe with us. The financial strength and future longevity of the business is backed by the transparent exposure of the companies [Red Carnation Hotels](#) unencumbered fixed assets in excess of US\$300,000,000 as of December 31, 2019. For more information, please visit [TTC.com](https://www.ttc.com) or follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) while using our hashtags #TravelWithTTC and #MakeTravelMatter.

About Trip School:

TripSchool is a recognized leader in innovative training programs for the travel industry. TripSchool offers online and in-person tour guide and tour director training certificates, as well as entrepreneurship courses and coaching and mentorship for travel businesses. They are known for their creative approach and emphasis on the power of storytelling and experiential learning. <https://thetripschool.com>

About Media Arts Institute of Alabama:

The Media Arts Institute of Alabama is a US 501(c)(3) nonprofit career development, training and education services organization that provides underserved individuals with the relevant knowledge, experimental learning and mentoring opportunities they need to have meaningful lives. Our Mission is to empower individuals with the skills they need to turn their passions and dreams into careers in the Media, Arts, Music and Tourism Industries. <https://mediaartsworld.org>

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