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New FinTech|X Accelerator to Boost Tampa Bay's National Reputation for FinTech Talent and Innovation

Tampa Bay Wave's FinTech|X Accelerator, in partnership with the University of South Florida Muma College of Business, aims to promote the City of St. Petersburg and the greater Tampa Bay region as a major hub for fintech, with additional backing from Encore Bank, MacDonald Ventures, and more.

TAMPA, FL (January 12, 2022) - Tampa Bay Wave, Inc. (Wave), a nonprofit helping entrepreneurs transform innovative ideas into real-world solutions and scalable businesses, is now accepting applications for its 2022 FinTech|X Accelerator program for pre-Series A fintech startups located throughout the U.S. and abroad. Applications will be accepted through February 28, 2022, and the program will kick off the week of April 11, 2022.

This new program was formed with help from a multi-year partnership with the University of South Florida Muma College of Business and a multi-year foundational level sponsorship from Encore Bank and its processing partner, Smiley Technologies, Inc. Additional support comes from local serial investor, disrupter and myMatrixx founder, Steve and Lindsay MacDonald through their firm, MacDonald Ventures. Other key funding partners include DTCC (The Depository Trust & Clearing Corporation) and Kyle Taylor, founder of The Penny Hoarder, plus strategic community partnerships with the Greater St. Petersburg Area Economic Development Corporation and the City of St. Petersburg.

"Wave's new FinTech|X Accelerator program will attract the best and most innovative fintech startups from throughout the US and beyond and will help showcase the talent and growing network of innovators and capital resources already in the Tampa Bay region." said Linda Olson, President and Founder of Tampa Bay Wave.

The 2022 FinTech|X Accelerator is a three-month program and offers companies access to key resources such as a dedicated Cohort Director, mentoring with notable tech founders and fintech experts, sales training, pitch coaching and investor introductions in an environment designed to support high-scale growth. Over the course of the program, there will be intensive blocks of on-site programming over 3-4 days during each of the program's three months. Selected companies are not required to relocate for the duration of the program but must plan for on-site participation in St. Petersburg (Tampa Bay) during each of the three blocks of programming. Companies in the accelerator program will also participate in Wave's Demo Day at the conclusion of the program in late June to pitch their companies to an audience of accredited investors, venture capitalists and other cybersecurity industry leaders.

The program will also serve as a link between the region's tech startup community and various financial services workforce development efforts around Tampa Bay, including the University of South Florida. FinTech|X will also promote greater startup density in Tampa Bay and high-wage job creation, while also addressing the region's below average wages and early stage capital gaps.

"The USF Muma College of Business, and particularly the Kate Tiedemann School of Business and Finance, is becoming known as a place where fintech leaders come to learn and launch businesses," said Moez Limayem, the Lynn Pippenger Dean of the Muma College of Business. "Partnerships like this one with Tampa Bay Wave will help entrepreneurs do just that."

Beyond the three-month program, accelerator participants will also receive ongoing support through Tampa Bay Wave's virtual CORE membership which provides year-round critical mentorship, strategic introductions to investors and customers, and other valuable services to further accelerate company development.

"MacDonald Ventures is excited to support the new FinTech|X Accelerator program presented by Tampa Bay Wave," states Steve MacDonald. "Our organization is deeply aligned with advancing and empowering rising, innovative fintech talent and phenoms. And, as an accounting graduate of University of South Florida, it is rewarding for me to join them in promoting the next generation of tech start-ups who are committed to creating a better world."

The FinTech|X Accelerator is the newest accelerator program offered by Tampa Bay Wave, the only Florida-based accelerator program accepted into GAN (gan.co), a network of the most respected accelerators around the world. FinTech|X is the second industry-focused program in Wave's portfolio of Accelerators, the other being CyberTech|X which focuses on cybersecurity startups. Much like Wave's other nationally-recognized accelerator programs, the TechDiversity Accelerator and CyberTech|X Accelerator, the FinTech|X Accelerator will recruit startups from across the U.S. and beyond, expanding the Tampa Bay region's reputation as a nationally and globally-recognized hub for innovation.

To learn more about the FinTech|X Accelerator Program, including information about how to apply, visit: <https://www.tampabaywave.org/fintech/>.

ABOUT TAMPA BAY WAVE:

Tampa Bay Wave, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing entrepreneurs with facilitated access to the resources, expertise, and capital they need to grow vibrant technology-based companies in Tampa Bay. Since March 2013, Tampa Bay Wave has supported more than 300 tech startups thanks to grant funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), plus support from its economic development partners Hillsborough County and the City of Tampa. Tampa Bay Wave also receives support from individuals such as Michael and Korrine Vuur Fraser and Kyle Taylor, founder of The Penny Hoarder, as well as from corporate partners such as A-LIGN, Bank of America, Bellini Better World, Encore Bank/STi, EY, Florida Blue, Florida Funders, Frontier Communications, JPMorgan Chase, KnowBe4, MacDonald Ventures, Nielsen Foundation, Rays/Rowdies Foundation, Tampa Electric, Truist Foundation, and Vinik Family Foundation. Tampa Bay Wave is also a member of the GAN network of accelerators. For more information, visit www.tampabaywave.org.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA:

The University of South Florida, a high-impact global research university dedicated to student success, generates an annual economic impact of more than \$6 billion. Over the past 10 years, no other public university in the country has risen faster in U.S. News and World Report's national university rankings than USF. Serving more than 50,000 students on campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee, USF is designated as a Preeminent State Research University by the Florida Board of Governors, placing it in the most elite category among the state's 12 public universities. USF has earned widespread national recognition for its success graduating under-represented minority and limited-income students at rates equal to or higher than white and higher income students. USF is a member of the American Athletic Conference. Learn more at www.usf.edu.

ABOUT ENCORE BANK AND SMILEY TECHNOLOGIES, INC.:

Encore Bank is a private boutique bank that couples experience with innovative technology to provide unprecedented levels of personal service and experiences to its clients through a hospitality-inspired concierge approach. Encore Bank provides a full suite of financial products and services to businesses, business owners, professionals, their families, and contacts with purpose, passion, and precision. Smiley Technologies seeks to modernize core banking applications and services so that banks can use their data in the most efficient and meaningful way. Learn more at <https://www.bankencore.com/about-us/> and <https://www.sibanking.com/>.

ABOUT MACDONALD VENTURES:

MacDonald Ventures is a tech angel investment company dedicated to building leaders for a better tomorrow. Steve MacDonald is a serial entrepreneur; a visionary who nurtures, mentors and invests in tech start-ups committed to creating a better world. With more than \$400 million in exits in companies he founded, his rise to multi-million dollar success started with the founding of

TechHealth in 1999 and myMatrixx, his pharmacy benefits firm, in 2001. Learn more at <https://macdonald.ventures/>.

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