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KANSAS CITY STARTUP FOUNDATION REBRANDS AS 'STARTLAND', ADDS POWER TO NONPROFIT'S BOARD

STARTLAND will retain Startland News, MECA Challenge, Back2KC programs

KANSAS CITY, Missouri (Nov. 13, 2019) — The Kansas City Startup Foundation, one of Kansas City's premier entrepreneurial community-building organizations, is now operating as STARTLAND, the organization announced Wednesday.

"STARTLAND will allow us to showcase what we do best: inspiring innovation through stories, experiences, and talent with a particular focus on real-world learning," said Adam Arredondo, CEO of STARTLAND.

The rebranding comes with a refreshed look for the nonprofit, as well as a website — STARTLAND.org — that capitalizes on STARTLAND's renewed focus, Arredondo added. The organization can be found across major social media platforms at [@STARTLANDKC](https://twitter.com/STARTLANDKC)

Prominent existing programs like [Startland News](#), [MECA Challenge](#) and [Back2KC](#) will continue, as will such popular events as Innovation Exchange, Startups to Watch, Top Venture Capital-Backed Companies, and Startup Crawl KC. The expansion of MECA Methods — real world learning training for educators — will also remain a focus.

The new STARTLAND name allows the organization to move beyond its origins in the Kansas City Startup Village, builds on the legacy of Startland News — the nearly 5-year-old nonprofit newsroom powered by the former KCSF — and reduces miscommunication stemming from use of the word "foundation" in the previous branding.

"The name KCSF has always confused people who rightfully assumed KCSF was either funding startup programs or directly working with founders to grow their businesses. We do neither," Arredondo said. "STARTLAND exists to activate a culture of innovation in which creators and entrepreneurs can be more successful."

Renewed efforts at the nonprofit are set to be boosted by its bolstered board of directors, which is co-chaired by [Anita Newton](#), chief innovation officer at CommunityAmerica, and [Darcy Howe](#), founder and managing director of KCRise Fund.

"Kansas City, itself, has graduated from a startup to being the home of many companies which have found talent, capital and resource partners to build and stay here," said Howe. "So it is fitting that our beloved 'Kansas City Startup Foundation' graduate to its growth phase and be the flag bearer for KC as 'STARTLAND.'"

New and returning members on the STARTLAND board also include:

- [Anurag Patel](#), co-founder and CEO, Helix Health;
- [Christine Kemper](#), founder, KC Girls Prep Academy;
- [Davin Gordon](#), business development officer, AltCap;
- [Marshall Lockton](#), senior vice president, Mylo/Lockton Companies;
- [Martha McCabe](#), executive director, KC STEM Alliance;
- [Roger Nelson](#), retired deputy chairman, Ernst & Young;
- [Thalia Cherry](#), founder and CEO, Cherry Sports;
- [Tina Peterson](#), founder and manager, Sprint Accelerator; and
- [Vinoov Vijay](#), chief marketing officer, H&R Block.

In addition, STARTLAND's advisors include:

- [Bill Gautreaux](#), business partner, MLP Holdings;
- [David Larrabee](#), retired senior vice president, American Century Investments;
- [David Oliver](#), attorney, Berkowitz Oliver LLP;
- [Evan Conway](#), CEO, Ad Parlor;
- [Leo Morton](#), chief operating officer, DeBruce Companies; and
- [Sheri Gonzalez](#), vice president and KC Rising director, Civic Council of Greater Kansas City.

"We aspired, and now can confidently say this region is America's startland and STARTLAND will continue to provide a guiding light here and to many across the U.S. who are watching and cheering for us," said Howe.

More about STARTLAND

STARTLAND is a 501c3 community-building organization activating a culture of innovation in Kansas City through stories, experiences, and talent with a particular focus on real-world learning. It's work is focused on creating moments of impact that inspire people to become changemakers. Learn more at [STARTLAND.org](https://startland.org)

More about Startland News

Startland News is a non-profit newsroom that elevates Kansas City's innovation community of entrepreneurs, startups, makers, creatives and risk-takers. Learn more at startlandnews.com

More about MECA Challenge

MECA Challenge is a one-day student innovation competition where teams solve a real world problem with alongside an entrepreneur mentor. Learn more at mecachallenge.com

More about Back2KC

Back2KC is an effort to reconnect successful former Kansas Citians to their hometown in hopes they re-engage and potentially even move home. Learn more at back2kc.org

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