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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NEW STARTUP PROGRAM COMES TO HISTORIC BELMONT DEVILLIERS**

PENSACOLA, FL – August 13, 2020 – Startups on the Blocks, a new entrepreneurial program that supports founders of color, kicks off today in the Historic Belmont DeVilliers neighborhood. The program has a mission to share best practices to grow a startup from the idea stage to the launch stage with a minimum viable product. The inaugural Startups on the Blocks will be online on Thursday, August 13, 6 – 8 PM, with a focus on entrepreneurial ecosystems, startup best practices, and one-on-one networking.

Every Thursday, participants connect individually and learn the methods for creating and growing a successful startup. “We’ll make sure our participants get introduced weekly to different startup topics and resources,” said Lloyd Reshard, the Kukua Institute’s board chairman. “Pensacola has an ever-growing entrepreneurial environment,” he said, “and the Kukua Institute is excited to contribute and make it stronger and more inclusive for communities of color.”

Wes Hudgens agrees. “This is a great idea and I know this will be a great opportunity to learn how to start a business the right way,” said Hudgens, the Senior Community Relations Specialist with Gulf Power Company. Leading the Kukua Institute’s entrepreneurial outreach efforts is Vercell Vance, a national award-winning computer scientist and entrepreneur. “These efforts will also lay a foundation for sound business practices, investment plans and market entry,” Vance said. “Our program participants will have tools for their use when investors and venture capitalists engage with them, especially at early-stage market opportunities like bootcamps, accelerator programs and pitch competitions,” he said.

Registration for the free, inaugural Startup on the Blocks event is at [KukuaInstitute.org](http://KukuaInstitute.org)

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What: Startups on the Blocks  
When: Thursday, August 13, 2020, 6 – 8 PM  
Where: A virtual online event  
Details: Registration is free at [KukuaInstitute.org](http://KukuaInstitute.org)

**Startups on  
the Blocks**