**For Immediate Release**

**STUDER COMMUNITY INSTITUTE GROWING THE TEAM TO EXPAND FOOTPRINT OF MISSION**

***The nonprofit founded in 2014 by Quint and Rishy Studer is adding staff to support the growing needs of entrepreneurs, expand community outreach.***

**PENSACOLA, FL** — The Studer Community Institute is growing its footprint to serve the community.

The institute began in 2014 focused on leadership development skill-building and early brain development education and support. The expansion of the team shows the growth of the Institute, and its evolution to include a focus on improving the community through support for entrepreneurs and harness the power of community and volunteers to make Pensacola a thriving, vibrant community.

“We began with a laser focus on how educational outcomes and economic vibrancy are intertwined,” said SCI’s President, Rachael Gillette. “We work hard to build brains, build jobs and build community and we always want to do more. We’re providing training and mentorship for hundreds of people — for parents and families, for business owners and leaders, and for employees who wanted to invest in themselves and their skills.

“Our newest team members are a true reflection of our community and of our commitment to making our city the greatest place to live in the world.”

Since its 2016 founding, SCI’s work has evolved to focus on four areas: Early Brain Development, Leadership Development, The Spring Entrepreneurship Hub, and CivicCon.

These pillars, Gillette said, represent SCI’s belief that healthy communities “begin with healthy children who show up to school ready to learn; grow with small businesses that are innovative, diverse and run by skilled leaders; develop with a vibrant network of support for new and startup businesses; and thrive when civic conversation is focused on tackling the issues that hold our community back in a thoughtful, results-oriented way.

These additions to our team bring such amazing strengths and community connections. We are fortunate to have them with us.”



The new SCI team members are:

**Eric Christianson, leadership development coordinator.** Eric’s role involves in preparing leadership training materials, delivering workshops and webinars and hosting online classes. His background is as an urban planner with a varied and impressive history in community development, including running an urban farm, training elected officials across Iowa, and developing agricultural markets in Morocco. Eric and his family moved to Pensacola and he joined the team in June.

**Arjuna Coles, operations assistant The Spring/SCI**. Arjuna also joined the Institute in June and is managing The Spring, the coworking space in the SCI Building on Garden Street, as well as helping to grow SCI’s entrepreneurship programs He is originally from Fairfax, Va., and moved to Pensacola in 2019 after working in the Florida Keys for almost two years. He was most recently a Digital Marketing Specialist for HIP Creative, Inc. where he oversaw the website development process and helped maintain project management software and now uses those skills at SCI.

**Rodney Jackson, director of business engagement.** Working out of The Spring Entrepreneur Hub beginning this fall, Rodney brings expertise from his banking career that includes both retail and commercial teams to help ensure SCI is reaching and serving diverse businesses through The Spring and SCI mentorship and training. Rodney is a Pensacola native and is returning here from his current home in Dallas, where was a senior commercial lender with a large regional bank.

**Frency Moore, community outreach coordinator.** Frency’s role includes event planning and coordination, and recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers to support the programmatic work of all divisions of the Institute. She is University of West Florida graduate with a degree in event management, she has been a classroom teacher at public and private schools across our area, most recently at Creative Learning Academy. She joined SCI in August.

**Steve Nissim, chief storyteller for SCI.** Steve had a more than 21-year career in broadcast journalism before joining the Institute in April. Steve has been using his journalistic and storytelling talents to capture and share the impact of the work that every division of the Institute does since he arrived. As the Institute has grown, the need for sharing the story of our work and what it means to people has become more critical. He will be the presenter for SCI’s annual early brain development fundraiser, Light Up Learning, planned for Oct. 21. 2021 at Blue Wahoos Stadium.

SCI became a nonprofit in 2016, and since then has worked to fulfill its mission of improving the quality of life for all people in community. “The SCI team are mission driven, dedicated group,” Gillette said. “Our new team members will help us continue to grow and serve the community in bigger and better ways.”

QUESTIONS: Contact Rachael Gillette, SCI President, at rgillette@studeri.org

*The Studer Community Institute is a 501(c)(3) public charity (EIN 47-5657008) and is registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to solicit contributions (Registration #CH48388.) Donors can deduct contributions under Internal Revenue Code section 170. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the division of consumer services by calling toll-free (800-435-7352) within the state. Registration does not imply, endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.*