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Meet Colleen Russo of The HUB Houston in Spring Branch



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Today we'd like to introduce you to Colleen Russo.

Colleen, can you briefly walk us through your story – how you started and how you got to where you are today.

I am known as “Coach” to students and friends and have over 35 years of experience in education. Born and raised in Queens, NY, I started my career as a physical education teacher and quickly moved into the realm of coaching. I spent 17 years working at The Monarch Institute, where I served as a Professional Educator Mentor, Life Coach, and Community Coordinator to help neurodiverse students engage with one another and build connections.

My passion and respect for these students inspired me to create a new program where young people would thrive and find acceptance in a community setting: a place where every voice would be Heard, Understood and Believed in. My dream has been realized with The HUB Houston. Our mission is to guide and empower young people to not only be competent individuals but also to make meaningful contributions to the world around them.

“I gathered passionate people together to create something wonderful, and here we are helping the next generation share their voice with the world!” Peace, Love, The HUB!

We’re always bombarded by how great it is to pursue your passion, etc – but we’ve spoken with enough people to know that it’s not always easy. Overall, would you say things have been easy for you?

Every day, I pinch myself to see if I am dreaming! The realization of my vision of a HUB was a blessing and I know it was meant to be. The HUB was established as a nonprofit and incorporated in July 2015, in response to the need and demand of several families wanting to guarantee their child receives the very best support of their individual needs. We promised to deliver this support through a strong mentorship program, development, cultivation and understanding of personal relationships, academic competence and community building.

But, we needed a campus. Along came a very generous family, The Hodges, who found the perfect location for us. They purchased the property and we lease it back from them for use as The HUB’s campus.

We were equally blessed with donations for all our needs. The donation of computers, printers, desks, chairs, storage bins, kitchen supplies, sofas, paintings and school supplies prepared us to begin our program on September 1, 2015.

So let's switch gears a bit and go into the The HUB Houston story. Tell us more about the business.

The HUB Houston is a non-residential educational organization serving the neurodiverse community in Houston and surrounding areas. We are located in Spring Branch and offer three distinctive programs for young adults from High School through Post Graduate ages.

The HUB offers a safe environment in which our Student Members are able to socialize, develop friendships, enhance relationships and benefit from interactions through community service and group support. Our programs are:

1. High School – A community-based educational program using a hands on approach with an emphasis on a project based high school curriculum. Our Student Members are invited to “do the work” of belonging through a distinctive personal and relational curriculum called the Journey of Belonging.
2. Life 101 – A bridge program for recent graduates who continue to work and build upon academic and life skills as well as learn new skills for employment, socialization, and community inclusion.
3. Club HUB – A traditional social group providing afternoon, evening, and weekend social engagement opportunities. Through a balance of input from Members and Staff, Club HUB creates a relationship-based community.

The HUB focuses on relationships. Through this work, we find our student members making friends and having meaningful relationships, maintaining jobs, having a better home life and giving back to the community in more ways than once thought were possible. Of this, I am most proud! Our “Hubsters” are incredible individuals and seeing them achieve their fullest potential, is the goal of The HUB.

Has luck played a meaningful role in your life and business?

I am the luckiest person in the world! My development director cautions me to be careful when I “wish” for anything! Once I do, it happens!

I believe that God has guided me down this path. He gives me angels to watch over our precious students, faculty and parents.

Pricing:

- Our High School tuition is \$20,000 per year.
- Tuition for our full-time Life 101 Program is \$20,000 per year.
- Club HUB is \$10,000 full time (year-round) but offer flexibility to suit financial circumstances as well as work schedules.

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