

# Empowering The Next Generation

An Interview with Tiger Woods



Tiger Woods at the new TGR Learning Lab in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**EDITORS' NOTE** Tiger (Eldrick) Woods, born December 30, 1975, is a professional golfer, entrepreneur, and philanthropist. Since turning professional in 1996, Woods has built an unprecedented competitive career. His achievements on the course—106 worldwide wins and 15 majors—have mirrored his success off the course as well. Woods serves as Founder and CEO of TGR ([tgr.tigerwoods.com](http://tgr.tigerwoods.com)), a multibrand enterprise comprised of his various companies and philanthropic endeavors, including TGR Design, the golf course design company; The Woods Jupiter, an upscale sports restaurant; TGR Live, a charity event production company; and TGR Foundation ([tgrfoundation.org](http://tgrfoundation.org)), Woods' education-based nonprofit organization.

Woods has 82 PGA TOUR wins, tied with Sam Snead, holding the record for most wins in history. His majors victories include five Masters Tournaments, four PGA Championships, three U.S. Open Championships, and three British Open Championships. With his second Masters victory in 2001, Woods became the first golfer ever to hold all four professional major championships at the same time.

In winning the 2000 British Open at St. Andrews, Woods became the youngest to complete the career Grand Slam of professional major championships and only the fifth ever to do so,

following Ben Hogan, Gene Sarazen, Gary Player, and Jack Nicklaus. Woods was also the youngest Masters champion ever, at the age of 21 years, three months and 14 days, and was the first major championship winner of African or Asian heritage. The 2000 U.S. Open and 2001 Masters victories came by record margins, 15 strokes and 12 strokes, respectively. He is the career victories leader among active players on the PGA TOUR and is the career money list leader.

2026 marks a major milestone for Woods, 30 years since turning pro and joining the PGA TOUR. This year is significant off the course as well, marking the 30th anniversary of his nonprofit, TGR Foundation, and 20 years of positively impacting the lives of young people through its Earl Woods Scholar Program and the flagship TGR Learning Lab in Anaheim, California. TGR Foundation's mission is to empower students to pursue their passions through education. By providing young people from under-resourced communities access to safe, inspiring spaces and innovative programs focused on STEAM educational enrichment, health and well-being and career and college career readiness, they are empowered to unlock their unlimited potential.

**What was you and your father's vision for creating TGR Foundation back in 1996?**

My dad taught me a simple principle at a young age: to make a positive impact on one person's life every day. That vision was



Flagship TGR Learning Lab in Anaheim, California





*Tiger Woods and students cut the ribbon to the Smilow Woodland TGR Learning Lab*

carried forward when we created TGR Foundation. We are making a positive impact in the life of a young person every single day.

Another important aspect of my upbringing that has influenced the Foundation's work is our family motto to "share and care." From the beginning, we set out to inspire young people to care about others and grow every single day, whether that's setting out to reach their dreams, or to help someone in their family or community.

**How do you define the mission of TGR Foundation?**

Our mission is to empower students to pursue their passions through education. Education has been a top priority in my life, always coming before sports or any other activity. That is why I decided early on that TGR Foundation should focus our efforts on providing access to education to as many kids who need it. By providing learning experiences and opportunities to kids who may not have access to them, we are making a difference. We are inspiring them to think broader and bigger and be empowered to achieve their dreams.

**Will you provide an overview of TGR Foundation's programs?**

Our job at TGR Foundation is to provide students not only with the programs and resources to attain success in school, but also the support to help them succeed afterwards.

Through our TGR Learning Labs and educational programs, we are helping kids be future-ready by empowering them to explore their passions and chase their dreams. We meet the kids where they are, providing the opportunities needed to grow as students and in life.

We also offer the Earl Woods Scholar Program which provides resources and support

for students who are often the first in their families to go to college. This program not only supports them on their path to college, but we are with them throughout college and into their careers.

**Will you highlight TGR Learning Lab's work to offer hands-on learning in STEAM?**

TGR Learning Labs are a safe place for kids to discover their passions and find a pathway to a possible career. We help them explore their interests by offering a variety of hands-on learning programs that allow them to connect their

interests with possible careers in fields aligned with science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) subjects.

In our society today, STEAM is so important. Most of the kids we serve don't have access to the technology and tools that are used in today's high-demand careers. We teach them to fly drones, launch rockets, code, record a podcast, produce music, and so much more. It's about experiencing STEAM hands-on, learning by doing. Then you see these kids light up, participating in things that they wouldn't have been able to do in their daily routine. When given access to hands-on learning, they're able to create and build a sense of pride.

**What makes the Earl Woods Scholar Program different from other scholarship programs?**

This scholarship program was established to celebrate my dad's legacy. It primarily supports kids from under-resourced communities who are the first in their family to go to college. Through the program, the scholars have access to financial aid along with resources and ongoing support from our staff and mentors.

My dad believed mentorship was very important for the development of a young person. You don't achieve dreams alone. It takes support in all different forms. To have others alongside you on your journey is impactful.

**How has the Foundation expanded beyond Southern California, and where do you see additional opportunities for growth?**

After nearly 20 years of impact at our flagship TGR Learning Lab in Anaheim, California, we opened at Cobbs Creek in West Philadelphia last year. Now we are getting ready to open a Learning Lab at Lulu's Place in Los Angeles followed by Augusta, Georgia with other communities on the horizon.

This expansion allows us to impact more lives in under-resourced communities. All of us at TGR Foundation are very excited about



*A STEAM lesson in rocketry at a TGR Learning Lab*





*TGR Foundation's second Learning Lab, located at Cobbs Creek in West Philadelphia*

expanding our reach and impact. I believe it's so important to have these Learning Labs available because they are tangible – something that kids can touch, feel and experience.

#### **How do you measure success for TGR Foundation?**

I believe success is measured by positively impacting the lives of students in whatever way they need most. What we are trying to do is real, tangible and directly impacting lives. Many of our students don't really see themselves having a career in STEAM, simply because they've never had the opportunity to think that far ahead. Through our Learning Labs and programs, we're here to change that, not only providing opportunities but also demonstrating that they have the potential and preparing them for the careers they are interested in.

#### **What advice would you give to young athletes who want to make an impact?**

I believe sports are something that we should all take part in, but education should be at the forefront. Young athletes should learn, develop and always challenge themselves, not

just on a playing field but in an academic setting as well.

#### **TGR Foundation is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Are you able to reflect on the past three decades of impact that TGR Foundation has made, and to take moments to celebrate the wins?**

As I reflect on our impact, we wouldn't be where we are today without the influence of my parents. In my house growing up, it was always family first, then education and then whatever sport I played. Following the tragic events of 9/11, I realized that I could make a larger impact in this world and decided that my Foundation should be modeled after the way I was raised. We needed to create a safe place for kids to call their own, centered on education, where they can learn, grow and dream. That became the vision for our TGR Learning Labs.

And now to see it come full circle is special. At the ribbon-cutting of our second Learning Lab in Philadelphia, the student who spoke shared the top words used to describe the Lab



*The Earl Woods Scholar Program supports primarily first generation college students*



*Tiger Woods flying a drone with the help of a student at a TGR Learning Lab*

based on a poll of her peers. Of all the great adjectives used, the most common word used was "home." That is what it's all about, providing a space for kids who need it to call home, empowering them to become the best people they can be.

#### **How do you want TGR Foundation to be remembered 50 years from now?**

I am proud that we have reached over 217,000 young people so far, but we are just getting started. The impact that we're trying to have is not just with their lives, but it's multi-generational. It's how the students we serve are paying it forward. First, it starts in their own homes and then in their communities. As they progress through life, it perpetuates; one leads to many.

We have alumni who are doctors, lawyers, engineers, coders, movie producers, scientists, and everything in between. I am so proud of our students and the positive influence that TGR Foundation has had on so many. It is far more impactful than any achievement I have made on a golf course. ●