



Jamaal and Christina Lane, the husband-and-wife team behind Portland's Champions Barbershops and Champions Barbering Institute, have launched an Internet platform called 'Be Great University,' offering a curriculum and a supportive community to help others identify and cultivate their inner strengths and start successful professions.

Creating a Platform for Success

Virtual 'Be Great University' new resource for entrepreneurs

Jamaal and Christina Lane are well known in Portland as the husband-and-wife team behind three successful barbershops and a barber institute. Now in response to the pandemic-enforced shutdown, they have taken lessons they've learned as Black business owners and launched a digital platform called "Be Great University," where they offer foundational curriculum paired with a supportive community for like-minded individuals striving for greatness and successful professions.

The Lanes virtually cut the ribbon on Be Great University earlier this month, building on their success with Champions Barbershops and Champions Barbering Institute and going beyond to share their wisdom, insight and guidance with others looking to pursue what Christina calls a "master's in self."

"Through operating Champions Barbering Institute, we learned that we could bring out the best in students beyond teaching technical skills," said Jamaal. "Barber-

ing was the draw, but we realized students were looking up to us and trusting us to help with their transition to become professionals. They were rebuilding and restructuring who they were and where they could go with confidence. We have seen the appreciation and the impact, and we want to share that same inspiration with others."

Be Great University's core program, called Cultivating Greatness, focuses on personal development as an essential key to professional success. The initial five-week, self-led workshop delves into how to cultivate greatness from within using proven foundational methods.

Dylan Cruz, one of the first participants, said the mentoring she received helped her focus on what she needed to change her work habits, but also on "How I view my perception and take steps toward my version of success."

"I was able to write my book because of the accountability I received via the group. The Lanes have created a step by

step process on how to find your inner purpose through growth and development," she said.

The Lanes believe the typical BU member might be a professional who is looking to pivot to a different model in response to the pandemic, someone who needs to get creative to make the necessary shift. Having the fortitude and optimism to make a necessary shift, even in the face of daunting circumstances, has been Jamaal's route to success throughout his professional life. He opened his first shop in 2008 on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

"We were operating under the belief that community builds champions, and that influenced how we connected with the neighborhood as a business," said Jamaal. "We understood that there would be no 'Champions' without the community's support. We stand up for them, and the community stands up for us."

Be Great University offers two levels of membership. Becoming a member of

the BU online community costs \$249 annually and offers a gathering place where like-minded people can come together and discuss structured topics. Enrolling in the Cultivating Greatness program, which includes annual community membership, costs \$699.

"The idea is to empower people to use their unique talents and inner strength to overcome any obstacles they find in their way," Christina said. "We are ready to coach up great people using the mental systems and methods that have proven to be a success in our personal and professional endeavors."

Added Jamaal, "We want to tap into each person's inner resolve to live life on their own terms; to find and define their pathway to success — a pathway that starts within. We are on a mission to help 2,000 members empower themselves by 2021 with Cultivating Greatness."

For more information, visit www.BeGreat.life.