

HIGHLANDS

TRAINING CENTER

- Work Hard
- Create Success
- Live Happy

Ryan Barnhart
Executive Director
Highlands Training Center
1736 E Spring St.
Cookeville, TN 38506
rbarnhart@highlandsoftn.com
September 2, 2025, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Highlands Training Center to express our enthusiastic support for Dr. Jessa Hershner and the Imagine Foundry as they partner with UC Makerspace. As a leading organization committed to providing foundational training skills for individuals of all ages, the Highlands Training Center recognizes the invaluable contribution that Imagine Foundry makes to our community development.

The Highlands Training Center has partnered with Dr. Hershner as part of the Empower Upper Cumberland pilot program. Dr. Hershner provided educational activities and skills training for the children of individuals on government assistance who were seeking self-sufficiency and employment through Empower Upper Cumberland. As the Imagine Foundry team worked with the children of Empower Upper Cumberland participants, it allowed the parents to focus solely on their soft-skills training at the Highlands Training Center. Many of the parents were also able to join in in the educational activities and training their children received at the Imagine Foundry. This allowed for family bonding time between the parents and the children as they learned together.

Supporting the new Discovery Center will allow for these moments to continue to happen on a much larger scale. This is great for our Upper Cumberland families as both parents and children can continue to bond, as well as enjoy age-appropriate activities that will keep their attention as they learn new things. One of the things I love most about that is the limited use of screen time that Dr. Hershner and her team employ while helping everyone increase their knowledge through hands-on learning and life skills.

We highly appreciate the collaborative and community-oriented approach that Imagine Foundry exhibits as a resource in our community. They have consistently demonstrated their dedication to being outstanding community partners, actively engaging with local organizations and establishing meaningful connections. Their drive and commitment to bringing positive outcomes in the Upper Cumberland certainly aligns with our vision of creating thriving families within our region.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Ryan Barnhart
Executive Director
Highlands Training Center