

Entrepreneurs Flock to Memphis for Summer of Acceleration

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (May 15, 2018) – Memphis entrepreneurial partners Epicenter, Start Co., and Memphis Bioworks Foundation today announced the 12 startup companies participating in their accelerator collaboration known as the Summer of Acceleration, now in its third year.

The Summer of Acceleration is a 100-day intensive, hands-on educational program that speeds the development of high-tech, high-growth startup companies, focused on four regional industries of strength: Home Services, Medical Device, Supply Chain and Logistics, and Ag Technology and Innovation.

During the Summer of Acceleration, Start Co. will provide centralized programming for core accelerator curriculum, such as building a business model, customer discovery, and sales pipeline development, to all participating startups. In turn, each accelerator partner will provide its cohort with industry-specific programming and connections to mentors and potential customers. All teams will co-locate at Start Co.'s downtown space throughout the summer.

Seed investments into the participating companies are made by Innova Memphis, an early-stage investor founded by Memphis Bioworks that is focused on funding high-growth companies in the bioscience, technology, and ag innovation fields. In addition, Epicenter, the entrepreneurial hub in the region, connects accelerator participants to community-wide resources, including a growing angel investor community and Executives-in-Residence who support represented industries.

The 2018 Summer of Acceleration startups are:

Launch Delta Home Services Accelerator, powered by ServiceMaster and Start Co., supports tech-based startups working to disrupt or replace existing home service technologies. The companies may work in the areas of internet of things (IoT) and smart home data, customer service platforms, platforms for delivering service and the home services supply chain. In addition to Innova Memphis, ServiceMaster invests in these startups, and the companies will have a dedicated space in Ground Floor at ServiceMaster. This year's teams are:

- [Pest Pulse](#) - A smart device that attaches to snap traps (primarily for rodents) and permanently monitors them for activity.
- [Please Assist Me](#) - A mobile platform that allows users to come home to groceries in the fridge, a tidy house, laundry completed, and more.
- [ServiceBot](#) - A next generation software tool to manage home service businesses and automate most back office and customer service functionality.
- [SecondKeys](#) - A platform that helps homeowners, landlords, tenants and vendors find reliable maintenance workers.
- [LawnTap](#) - An app that automates the lawn care process, allowing lawns to take care of themselves through lawn sensors.
- [eCINCHal](#) - A subscription box service that will automate your home maintenance needs.

Start Co. also operates Sky High, which focuses on game-changing Edtech solutions that seek to solve education problems in Memphis and accepts applications year-round on a rolling basis. **Doyenne360**, a packaged, scalable STEM kit providing consistent, quality STEM curriculum, hands-on activities, and enables technology, will also participate alongside the summer accelerators.

“Accelerator graduates tell us that the co-location of our programs and the interdisciplinary core education they obtained created cross-collaborations and opportunities for their startups that wouldn’t exist otherwise,” said Eric Mathews, CEO and founder of Start Co. “We’re the only market in the country that offers this kind of accelerator experience.”

ZeroTo510 Medical Device Accelerator, founded and operated by Memphis Bioworks Foundation, specializes in commercializing medical devices that take advantage of the FDA’s 510k regulatory pathway. Now in its seventh year, ZeroTo510 is recognized as the premier accelerator for entrepreneurs pursuing the FDA approvals and business development in the medical device category. Applications for the 2018 cohort came from around the world and covered a broad range of categories, such as diagnostics, pediatrics, orthopedics, cancer and drug delivery, to name a few. The program has three times been named one of the top 25 accelerator programs in the country by the Seed Accelerator Rankings Project.

- **Spiritum** - This team from Little Rock, AR, has developed a fully integrated endotracheal tube securement device designed to prevent unplanned extubations (a patient pulling out their breathing tube), with the potential to save hospitals hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in preventable medical expenses.
- **Dark Horse Technologies** - Developed at North Dakota State, this team looks to bring a total ankle replacement (TAR) to market. The Bison TAR design (patent pending) has very important features that enable substantial improvements in components shape, materials and fixation methods for higher quality and increased life span in comparison with current TARs.
- [Hera Health Solutions](#) - From Georgia Tech, this team is focused on the development of a biodegradable contraceptive arm implant that will eliminate a painful and invasive removal procedure associated with current contraceptive implant technology.
- **Fairway Biomed** - Developed by a surgical oncologist at Washington University in St. Louis, Fairway Biomed’s LIVO is a surgical tool to improve bleeding control problems in solid organs, specifically the liver. By better controlling bleeding in liver surgery with the LIVO, inter operative bleeding risks will be mitigated, and more patients will be eligible for liver resection."

“Medical device innovation is complicated to navigate, and we believe that ZeroTo510 and Memphis are the ideal combination for success,” explained Chris West, president of ZeroTo510. “Building on the foundation of the Summer of Acceleration, we are then able to focus on putting our ZeroTo510 entrepreneurs at the center of our robust medical device ecosystem that is home to experts in regulatory affairs, pricing/reimbursement, manufacturing, prototyping, product development, legal affairs, hospital decision making, and many other highly specialized aspects of taking a medical device from idea to market.”

As Epicenter works with system partners to transition all entrepreneurial programming to include year-round training and support for startups and scale-ups, it is focused on recruiting and serving an inaugural cohort of scaling supply chain and logistics companies this fall. This summer, Epicenter will host **Truckish** and its two founders, who will participate in the summer accelerator programming and receive one-on-one support, connections, and industry-specific curriculum from local experts and mentors. Truckish provides plug-and-play hardware for trucks to collect and sync location and vehicle performance data with its cloud-based platform.

A fourth partner, AgLaunch, a joint initiative of Memphis Bioworks Foundation and Tennessee Department of Agriculture, operates a year-long, phased acceleration program that supports the growth of agricultural technology and innovation startups. Rather than offering concentrated programming in the summer, AgLaunch365 follows the growing seasons of the Mid-South region and leverages a strong regional farmer network to test and validate new technology. The next phase of AgLaunch365 will begin accepting applications in May.

In addition to industry programming, this year, female founders in all accelerators can elect to participate in Start Co.'s parallel Upstart track, which will provide complementary networking and mentorship opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

“The evolution and refinement of this accelerator collaboration reflects the evolution of our local entrepreneurial ecosystem,” said Leslie Smith, president and CEO of Epicenter. “While these early-stage programs are a critical piece of our support system for entrepreneurs and recruitment of talent and ideas to the region, as a community, we’re also we’re planning year-round, dynamic, milestone-driven programs that support growth-stage companies. Together with additional programs such as CO.STARTERS and portfolio engagement – which connects accelerator graduates with capital and customers – we’re ensuring the continuum of support serves entrepreneurs in various stages and industries.”

Accelerator programming launched on May 7. On May 8, the entrepreneurial ecosystem welcomed the Rise of the Rest Tour, led by AOL co-founder Steve Case. The tour highlights emerging entrepreneurial ecosystems that are outside of coastal markets like Silicon Valley, Boston, and New York. The day concluded with a pitch showcase at Clayborn Temple, where eight local startups competed for a \$100,000 investment from Revolution Partners, and a \$100,000 match from Innova. Soundways, a Start Co. accelerator graduate and participant in the 2016 Summer of Acceleration, won the competition.

The Summer of Acceleration will culminate on Aug. 16 with Demo Day, the startups’ opportunity to pitch their startup ideas to investors, share their insights with the greater entrepreneurial community, and network with community leaders.

Partners and sponsors for the Summer of Acceleration include Launch Tennessee, American Airlines, Archer Malmo, AutoZone, IBM, Baker Donelson, Mosaik, The Marston Group, ServiceMaster and many more.

###

About Epicenter:

The Memphis region has a connected and collaborative entrepreneurship ecosystem led by Epicenter, the nonprofit hub of the greater Memphis entrepreneurial movement. Using a systems approach, Epicenter drives strategy and measures impact among a network of economic development, academic, corporate, and government partners to increase support to new and existing tech startups, creative and community-based businesses, student entrepreneurs, and others across industries and stages of growth. Epicenter and its partners connect these entrepreneurs and their innovative ideas to programming, capital, customers, and talent in order to create a just, inclusive, and growing economy that accrues to all Memphians. More information is at epicentermemphis.org.

About Start Co.:

[Start Co.](http://StartCo.org) is a nationally recognized nonprofit 501(c)(3) venture development organization based in Memphis, Tennessee, that relentlessly builds founders and companies, promoting entrepreneurship for everyone with a focus on digital startups. Start Co. is a member of the [Global Accelerator Network](http://GlobalAcceleratorNetwork.org) and aims to advance Memphis' economic growth through entrepreneurship. The organization is supported by partners including [American Airlines](http://AmericanAirlines.com), [Archer Malmo](http://ArcherMalmo.com), [Baker Donelson](http://BakerDonelson.com), [IBM](http://IBM.com), [The Marston Group](http://TheMarstonGroup.com), [Mosaik](http://Mosaik.com) and [ServiceMaster](http://ServiceMaster.com). More information can be found at neverstop.co.

About Memphis Bioworks Foundation:

Memphis Bioworks is the Mid-South's go-to organization for creating companies, jobs and investments in biosciences; from medical devices to agbio to university research, helping take ideas from concept to market. A visionary community leader, Memphis Bioworks has a well-established record of sparking new levels of economic vitality by investing in entrepreneurs, building state-of-the-art labs and facilities, and training the next generation of workers. For more information, visit www.memphisbioworks.org.

###

CONTACT:

Jessica Taveau

Epicenter

jessica@epicentermemphis.org

901-220-2710

Lauren Whisenant Waites

Archer Malmo for Start Co.

LWaites@archermalmo.com

901-260-4121

Ralph Berry

Memphis Bioworks Foundation

rberry@sullivanbranding.com

901-486-4269