



Press Release – For Immediate Release

## Kids First: Always, and Forever

*Former UC gymnast Jeff Metzger has never lost sight of his kid-first mission.*

**Groundbreaking set for 10:30 a.m. on Tues., May 14 at largest private kids' rec center in the U.S. Kids First Sports taps Cincinnati United Contractors for new, \$6 million East Kemper Road facility.**

[SYCAMORE TOWNSHIP, OHIO ~ May 12, 2019] KidsFirst Sports Center and its builder, Cincinnati United Contractors (CUC), have launched a \$6 million expansion to further diversify and grow one of the largest privately-owned recreational sports centers in the nation.

The new, 54,000-square-foot facility ([www.kidsfirstsports.com](http://www.kidsfirstsports.com)) will sit next to its current East Kemper Road HQ and will more than double capabilities for basketball and volleyball, allowing for six basketball courts or eight volleyball courts. With completion, the Kids First campus will occupy 162,000 square feet on 13 acres, a wonderland of academics, sports, and healthy choices for local kids.

Behind it all: a professional relationship between Kids First and CUC ([www.cintiunited.com](http://www.cintiunited.com)) dating back eight previous construction assignments to their first collaboration in 1983. The current expansion will allow the Ronnie Grandison Basketball Academy and Kids First volleyball services to exponentially expand. But, it wasn't without its challenges.

Property had to be acquired, zoning had to be worked out, and financing had to be secured. That's where Kids First once again turned to CUC. After a more than 20-year relationship with one lender, Kids First was not able to secure favorable financing, so they turned to CUC, who brought in North Side Bank. North Side Bank jumped at the opportunity to partner with Kids First on the project and closed on the financing in record time. CUC was also able to help Kids First navigate the zoning process to achieve the approvals needed for the project to move forward.

Metzger is a decorated, multi-sport athlete hailing from Woodward High School and former University of Cincinnati gymnast. When a baseball injury derailed his career in gymnastics, he took a job teaching tumbling at a dance studio and the proverbial seed was sown. Metzger launched Kids First from a church basement in 1973. Since then, it's blossomed into an athletic and academic beast, with two dozen programs such as TumbleBees (gymnastics) drawing upwards of 1,600 kids every week.

"Our foundation is our Mission, 'To give kids the tools to grow into a happy, healthy, responsible adults,' " said Metzger. A 1998 rebranding changed the company's name from Queen City Gymnastics to Kids First Sports Center, paving the way for the current, 108,000-square-foot campus. It also drew upon its Seven Unifying Principles for inspiration.

"One of those principles is continual, perpetual growth, to create new opportunities for all of our kids," said Metzger. "It's been an amazing journey, with some incredible families. We've trained the grandparents of some of these kids."

"We are thrilled to assist Kids First once again, in their continual quest for every child to grow up happy, healthy, and physically active," said CUC President Chuck Kubicki. "We were there 36 years ago, we will be there for Jeff forever."

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