

Desirae Simone Seals

The FĒNX (Mac Lackey, LLC), Community Director

Age: 26

WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

Spokane, Washington

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN CHARLOTTE AREA?

4 years

TELL US A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT YOU?

Hi judges! My name is Desirae Seals and I am extremely excited at the possibility of receiving this amazing award. Here is a little background information about me: Both of my parents have served in the military for 20 years (Air Force and Marines) therefore I've spent my childhood moving every 3 years mainly overseas - Italy, Germany, and Japan. While moving around was tough as a child, I am so grateful for the numerous countries I have visited, cultures I have experienced, and people I have met. These experiences have shaped me into an open-minded individual and has become an influence in my entrepreneurial career goals. I have been on a mission the last few years to learn the ins and outs of running a business so I can have the flexibility of doing something I love, travel, and work the way I want to.

After graduating from UNC Chapel Hill in 2016, I started my own mobile personal training business from scratch. I then moved on to building an online health coaching program specifically for entrepreneurs. I have always been passionate about health, especially in relation to entrepreneurs and business owners, but I then decided I wanted to pursue bigger things. I decided to take a step back to expand my skills and knowledge in other areas by working for other entrepreneurs.

I began working as the executive assistant under the CEO/Founder of Forward Properties, a financial startup. In less than a year as their youngest employee, I was promoted to Director of Operations due to my drive, work ethic, and leadership capabilities. During my time at Forward Properties, I developed and monitored systems and processes to boost employee performance, drive customer satisfaction, and ensure they were reaching their financial goals. I also helped run their international call center of 150 employees and built a local Charlotte team from scratch.

I now work for Mac Lackey, a local Charlottean entrepreneur who has built, scaled, and sold several companies at 7-8 figures. I work on several projects with Mac, but my main role is to build, grow, and improve The FĒNX as their Community Director, an online community

designed to connect entrepreneurs at every level and a platform where Mac and other experts share their years of experience to help entrepreneurs reach their goals and build connections. I have also helped build ExitDNA, a private Mastermind on our platform specifically for entrepreneurs looking to sell/exit their businesses at top value. I absolutely love helping and working within this community because I understand the struggle and sacrifices it takes to become an entrepreneur. Community is so important for success in both our personal and professional lives.

DURING YOUR TIME VOLUNTEERING FOR A COMMUNITY ACTIVITY OR PROJECT, WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT?

On March 11, 2011 during softball practice in Okinawa, Japan, emergency sirens went off around the entire island. A 9.0 magnitude earthquake was reported near Japan and my family and I quickly drove to the highest part of the island in fear of a tsunami. No tsunami hit Okinawa, but then the news came of the tsunami that hit Japan's north east coast, killing 22,000 people, and leaving 4 times that homeless.

My most memorable moments surrounded helping those affected by this tragedy, and helping our environment recover. I personally put together a blood drive and car wash on our military base and helped raise thousands to support those affected by the 2011 tsunami. While Okinawa, Japan was not hit with a tsunami, the island was still hit with larger than normal waves that washed up a lot of garbage. I spent several hours across a few weeks helping pick up trash and cleaning up the beaches along the Okinawan Coast.

IN YOUR OPINION, HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY? PLEASE BE AS DETAILED AS YOU CAN.

During the last few years, my drive and passion has been towards entrepreneurship and building the skills necessary to run successful businesses. As any successful entrepreneur will tell you, it is not always easy. In fact, entrepreneurship is almost never easy and can be an incredibly lonely journey. Most entrepreneurs have to start out with little financial backing and sometimes even less moral and emotional support from friends and loved ones. There is one big thing that I lacked when I first started down this path...a community. A community that supports you, grows you, and challenges you along your journey of building and growing a business. How do I currently contribute to my community? By helping build, manage, grow and engage on The FENX, an entrepreneurial community that I once lacked and so many people currently need. While our virtual platform is global, 80% of our members live in Charlotte. I am so glad to be contributing to growing our Charlotte entrepreneur connections, especially as Charlotte continue to grow into one of the best cities in the US.

PLEASE LET US KNOW ANY AWARDS OR RECOGNITIONS YOU'VE RECEIVED IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER:

I have not received any official rewards due to the fact I've either worked for myself or have worked for brand small new start-ups that did not have awards/recognitions set in place.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES OR INTEREST?

Lifting weights, reading business/self-help books, and writing are hobbies that have truly helped me grow physically, mentally, and emotionally. The hobby that I enjoy for pure fun? Playing COD Warzone on PlayStation 4.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE QUOTE THAT YOU STAND BY?

"Fail early, fail often, but always fail forward." – John C. Maxwell

I have this quote as my computer background, phone background, pinned to my mirror, and even inscribed into my air pods so I can see it at the gym. It reminds me that I should never be afraid of failure or ashamed of failure because it is necessary to become successful in life. I have learned so much from my failures, and I am proud of them because I have taken those risks to get to where I am today.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 5 YEARS? 10 YEARS?

I am one of those people that do not believe in getting super specific with 5–10-year goals...because goals change, situations change, and people change. But what I do know is that I see myself owning at least one business that I truly enjoy running that gives me the flexibility to travel, work when I want, and do something I love. I also want to use my knowledge and skills to help other blooming entrepreneurs get their feet off the ground whether that's advice or investments.

CAN YOU SHARE ONE THING THAT IS ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?

Skydiving is on my bucket list, not because I think I will enjoy it, but because I am terrified to do it! I believe this experience will push me way past my comfort zone.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU USED YOUR PASSPORT?

February 2020 to Jamaica! This was my last big trip before the pandemic hit us.

WHAT IS A FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF THAT NO ONE KNOWS?

Italian was my first language! I moved to Italy at 3 months old, and an Italian family watched me while my mom was at work. It got to a point where I could not even talk to my mom because I was around Italian more than English.

WHO IS YOUR HERO?

My mother. She is the most driven, mentally strong person I know. She has pushed me through various life challenges and encouraged me to chase after my dreams which has become a huge part in my success today.

WHAT WAS THE LAST BOOK YOU READ?

How To Win Friends And Influence People by Dale Carnegie. It is actually the third time I have read it! This is one of my favorite books that has so many golden nuggets on communication with your love's ones, employees, clients, etc. and I recommend it to everyone.

WHAT WAS THE LAST MOVIE YOU SAW?

Inception (2010). This movie I have also seen a few times since it was released. It is one of those movies that requires breaking into pieces to truly understand it. I also have always been fascinated with space and alien life, so this movie is one of my favorites!

WHAT WAS THE LAST CONCERT YOU SAW?

Is it sad I have not been to a concert in a really long time? The last concert I saw was in 2009 featuring John Mayer in Raleigh, NC.

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