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USHER and Big Sean Announce \$1 Million Entertainment Incubator to Power the Next Generation of Creators with Generous Support from Ilitch Sports + Entertainment and Emory University Goizueta Business School

The state-of-the-art facility will exist inside of the highly anticipated Michigan Central Boys & Girls Club, slated to open in February 2026

DETROIT, MI — December 4, 2025 — Global entertainment icons and Boys & Girls Clubs alumni USHER and Big Sean have announced a landmark \$1 million investment in Detroit youth with the creation of the Detroit Entertainment Innovation Incubator which will be housed inside the new Michigan Central Boys & Girls Club of Southeastern Michigan. Along with Usher's New Look® (UNL) and Sean Anderson Foundation (SAF), additional key education and industry partners include Ilitch Sports + Entertainment and Emory University's Goizueta Business School. The Entertainment Innovation Incubator will offer a virtual production studio, special effects lab, creators lounge and more.

"Detroit has always been the blueprint for innovation, from the assembly line to Motown. This collaboration—especially with two heavy hitter alumni—extends that legacy by proving the creative economy can be a pathway to ownership and equity," said Shawn H. Wilson, President & CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan. "Together, with our amazing partners, we're transforming talent into capital and creativity into generational wealth."

"I've always been a true believer in igniting a spark in the next generation to be better and have access to things we didn't. This new spark lab in Detroit with my friend and fellow Boys & Girls Club alum Big Sean will not only minimize the access gap for the youth but also prepare them for greatness. It takes just one person to believe in your success, and I'm honored to be one of many in this partnership to help make that happen," said USHER.

Detroit's Big Sean is no stranger to Michigan Central and has been integral to ushering in the city's revival using his talents as a creator not only in 2018 when The Station and surrounding buildings and areas were purchased by Ford but also during [The Station's grand opening celebration](#) in 2024. He

now returns to continue helping shape its future, ensuring Detroit's next generation of creators have the tools, mentorship, and networks to thrive right here in their city at Michigan Central with Boys & Girls Club.

"Detroit is where my creativity was born. From freestyling in my mom's basement to performing on the biggest stages in the world. My mission has always been to make sure the next generation of dreamers and innovators from my city have the access, tools, and mentorship to do the same," said Big Sean. "The Innovation Incubator is about showing young people that they don't have to leave Detroit to chase opportunity, they can build it right here."

This marks the fifth significant investment by Big Sean and the Sean Anderson Foundation since 2018 in support of BGCSM. SAF has gifted four fully operational Big Sean Studios inside BGCSM Clubs, providing more than 10,000 youth with hands-on music exploration opportunities in recording, production, DJing, and drumline.

The Incubator will be housed within the new Michigan Central BGCSM Club on the dedicated youth floor inside The Station—part of Michigan Central's 30-acre innovation district where startups, industry, and community partners convene and collaborate to turn bold ideas into real solutions. The space will serve as a launchpad for Detroit youth, connecting them to emerging industries through hands-on experience, access, and creative technology.

"At Michigan Central, we're committed to creating a future where every young person has the chance to innovate and define the next generation of industries right here in Detroit," said Carolina Pluszczynski, Chief Operating Officer, Michigan Central. "By our work with BGCSM, now with the added support from Usher and Big Sean, we're continuing to build new pathways and opportunities, nurturing the next generation of innovators - from creators to manufacturers to technologists - who will drive our city forward for decades to come."

Ilitch Sports + Entertainment, which serves as the combined business operations arm of the Detroit Red Wings and the Detroit Tigers, has partnered with BGCSM for several years, enriching the Red Wings' Learn, Play, Score program by opening five Esports lounges at BGCSM Club locations throughout metro Detroit since 2020.

"Ilitch Sports + Entertainment is honored to partner with Detroit icon Big Sean and R&B legend Usher to empower the next generation of leaders through the Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan," said Ryan Gustafson, President & CEO of Ilitch Sports + Entertainment. "Our longstanding partnership with BGCSM has created meaningful opportunities for Detroit's youth to thrive, and we're excited to continue inspiring and developing future leaders across our community."

The Innovation Incubator will deliver a full suite of advanced programming that equips young people ages 14–24 for high-growth careers from film, television, and music production to AI, 3D, immersive technologies, and special effects. Participants will gain access to industry-recognized credentials through Emory's Goizueta Business School and Ilitch Sports + Entertainment, mentorship from leading executives and creators, and seed funding to launch their own content ventures and creative startups - empowering the next generation of Detroit talent to build, innovate, and lead.

This new Incubator is just one exciting facet of the soon-to-be-opened Michigan Central Boys & Girls Club. The 13,000 sq.-ft. space also will feature an autonomous training center and an innovation lab

designed to directly connect youth to broader emerging industries in fields like mobility, advanced manufacturing and AI.

The new Michigan Central BGCSM Club location is slated to officially open with a ribbon cutting in February 2026.

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About Usher's New Look

Usher's New Look® (UNL) is a non-profit organization that transforms the lives of under-resourced youth through a comprehensive program which develops passion-driven, global leaders. Founded in 1999 by Usher Raymond IV and his mother Jonetta Patton, who were inspired after witnessing the dire narratives of Atlanta teens in a courtroom. As a result, UNL was created to tackle systemic barriers that prevent teens from graduating from high school and college.

Since its formation, Usher's New Look has become a catalyst for under-resourced youth around the world to find their spark (passion), graduate, and reach their full potential. With unique mentorship and leadership programming designed to help teens see past their circumstances, discover their potential and unlock their purpose, UNL is creating a global network of leaders. To date, we've touched the lives of more than 50,000 youth!

About Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan

Serving more than 17,000 youth annually, BGCSM is a national model for reimagining youth development by integrating workforce readiness, entrepreneurship and mental wellness into its Club experience. With a focus on economic mobility, BGCSM is creating a future where all youth are ready to compete and lead in the industries shaping tomorrow. Learn more at www.bgcsm.org.

About Sean Anderson Foundation

Founded in 2012 by multi-platinum recording artist and philanthropist Big Sean, the Sean Anderson Foundation (SAF) is dedicated to improving the quality of life for youth and families across underserved communities through education, wellness, and creative expression. With a focus on mental health, financial literacy, and career development. The Foundation continues to invest in the future of Detroit's creative economy, empowering the next generation to "Go Higher" in every aspect of life.