

Tiara Yachts Creates Positive Waves for Great Lakes Boatbuilding School and Marine Industry

The Great Lakes Boat Building School (GLBBS) received a transformational gift of \$75,000 from [Tiara Yachts](#) in support of incoming students and the “Come Aboard, Launch Careers” capital campaign that will increase the school’s capacity for educating future generations of marine professionals.

Tiara Yachts, with headquarters in Holland, Michigan, is a family-owned manufacturer of American-made luxury watercrafts. It was recently announced Tiara earned two 2021 Marine Industry Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) Awards from the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) for outstanding customer service satisfaction in two product segments. This included excellence in the outboard boats, fiberglass outboard boats product segment and the inboard boats and express cruisers product segment.

Tiara was founded by the family patriarch Leon Slikkers based on his passion for striving to create the dream vessel and his “quest for being the best.” The Slikkers family continues to go into the complex everyday and the commitment to excellence permeates throughout the organization today.

This is evident by Leon’s son, Thomas Slikkers, President/CEO, S2 Yachts, Inc. stating “Tiara is not an assembly plant, we strongly believe in what we are doing by translating our passion into building individual boats. We see that passion developing in the students from the Great Lakes Boat Building School which is why we decided to make this gift.”

This is where the mission and vision of Great Lakes Boat Building School and Tiara Yachts intersect resulting in the foundation of this mutually beneficial and symbiotic relationship with GLBBS helping address one of the biggest challenges in the Michigan marine industry – the dire workforce shortage of qualified marine service technicians and marine carpenters.

“We are humbled and honored to be the recipient of this generous gift from Tiara Yachts, a pillar of Michigan, United States and

international marine industry,” said Nikki Storey, Great Lakes Boat Building School President. “This flagship donation from the Slikkers family will transform the lives of students almost immediately and the positive impact on the fundraising momentum for our new facility will have a positive ripple effect on the industry for many years to come. This gift is incredible.”

The Slikkers family donation is structured to earmark \$30,000 for two incoming student sponsorships of \$15,000 each, which covers almost 70% of the cost of a student’s tuition. This can make the difference for a student being able to afford attending GLBBS.

The remaining \$45,000 of the contribution supports the “Come Aboard, Launch Careers” capital campaign to expand the instructional infrastructure allowing the school to more than double its annual graduation capacity to 50 students each year.

The \$3.8 million expansion project at GLBBS involves the demolition of an existing building and docking structures along with the modification of the existing site and utilities to accommodate the new 10,000 sf building for instruction and hands-on skill training in marine mechanics and marine electronics. The space can offer training to individuals currently working in the marine industry as well.

The school leadership announced recently the final hurdles will be cleared shortly to finalize an economic development related grant that will provide \$2.7 million in funding. The remaining \$1.1 million for the project will be raised from private sources. With the Tiara Yachts gift included, the GLBBS campaign stands at just over 40% of the goal in the very early stages of the campaign.

GLBBS continues to produce qualified students from their Comprehensive Career Boat Building Program and the Marine Service Technology Program (MST), in partnership with Mercury Marine University, with a consistent 100% placement rate. The School is continuing to address the shortage of skilled trades and craftspeople in the marine industry following graduation.

Information about the “Come Aboard...Launch Careers” capital campaign is available by contacting Tom Coates, Director of Development at thomas.coates@glbbs.edu also by calling

906.484.1081. For prospective student enrollment information email admissions@glbbs.edu or call 906.484.1081.

Great Lakes Boat Building School is a non-profit organization recognized as a charitable organization and is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges.