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Franchisor Spotlight

Lightbridge Academy to Open its First Location in Florida, Bringing Its Circle of Care to Port St. Lucie

[Lightbridge Academy®](#), one of the nation's [leading providers](#) of early childhood education and child care, has announced the opening of the first new center in Florida. Located in Port St. Lucie, Florida this center is located at 8565 Commerce Centre Drive and targeted to open late this year. The East Coast-based franchise is quickly moving into multiple new markets as entrepreneurs recognize the opportunity to provide an essential and rewarding child care service to their local community.

One of those entrepreneurs is [Al Ferrari](#) – the franchise owner and local resident behind this new Lightbridge Academy center in Port St. Lucie, along with his sons Tommy and Eric Ferrari.

Ferrari spent a quarter century in the foodservice industry, working in operations for brands like Sysco and Gordon Food Service. But the father of two says his true passion has always been for his family. Now, Ferrari is leaving the foodservice business and starting a new career that will allow him to leverage his passion for educational child care. He will be joined by Tommy and Eric, college graduates with degrees in business and marketing, as the family begins this venture together.

“My wife and I have two boys, and when they were young, we were very involved with all their activities,” said Ferrari. “I coached them in soccer and football throughout their childhood and watched them enjoy the sports throughout their high school years. We were also very involved in our local church and the youth ministry, and we

taught elementary children at the school on Wednesdays and Saturdays at the church. So, we were always involved with children and dreamed of opening a preschool.”

When looking at various franchises, Ferrari says Lightbridge Academy was a clear frontrunner right away. “Lightbridge stood out to me with its Circle of Care philosophy, which places a high importance on the care provided to not just the child, but everyone in the child’s life, and it’s so much more than just a preschool or daycare,” he said. “They truly are *The Solution for Working Parents*®. It’s tough to juggle your personal life and work – especially when both parents are working. And with Lightbridge, parents are provided much more support. They offer cameras in the classroom so parents can stay connected to their child’s day, the eCommunication app allows for real-time communication from the teachers, extended hours, facial recognition entry systems and more. They even do occasional babysitting for parents to enjoy a night out. I wish all of these things were around when I had young children, and that’s what really made Lightbridge stand out to me.”

Now, with the new center, Ferrari says he is eager to bring a higher level of child care and early education to his community. “As far as trends, Port St. Lucie is quickly developing into a residence for young families,” he said. “The trends are changing to accommodate those young working families. We’re the pioneers in Florida for Lightbridge Academy, and I want to help the brand grow. We want to provide even more value to the community and demonstrate that this is a different type of child care. A child care center should care for parents too! We are here to support the busy working parent while also providing nurturing care in a high quality learning environment.”

Although this is the first Florida location, the brand is targeting expansion in other high demand markets including Tampa and Orlando.

“We couldn’t be more excited to bring Lightbridge Academy’s 25 year tradition of educational child care excellence as *The Solution for Working Parents*® to Port St. Lucie, and we couldn’t have found better partners than the Ferrari family,” said CEO [Gigi Schweikert](#). “This is an incredible time for the Lightbridge Academy brand as we continue to grow and make a positive impact for everyone in our Circle of Care and the communities we serve.”

To learn more about Lightbridge Academy’s programs, visit <https://LightbridgeAcademy.com/>. To learn more about franchising opportunities, visit <https://LightbridgeAcademyFranchise.com/>.

About Lightbridge Academy:

Established in 1997, the company was founded as a family business based on core values and a Circle of Care philosophy that places equal importance on the needs of children, their families, teachers, center owners and the community. Now celebrating its 25th anniversary, Lightbridge Academy provides quality early education and child care programs to children aged six weeks through kindergarten. The company currently has over 140 child care centers either open or in development throughout

Florida, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. In response to COVID-19, Lightbridge Academy launched The Lightbridge Promise as the Gold Standard for health & safety in the child care industry. In 2020, the company was featured on the Inc. 5000 ranking, Franchise Times Top 200+ awards, and on Newsweek's 2021 list of America's Best Customer Service. For the 2nd year in a row, Lightbridge Academy was on the Inc. 5000 list of fastest growing private companies. In 2023, Lightbridge Academy was featured for the 9th year on Entrepreneur Magazine's Franchise 500.