



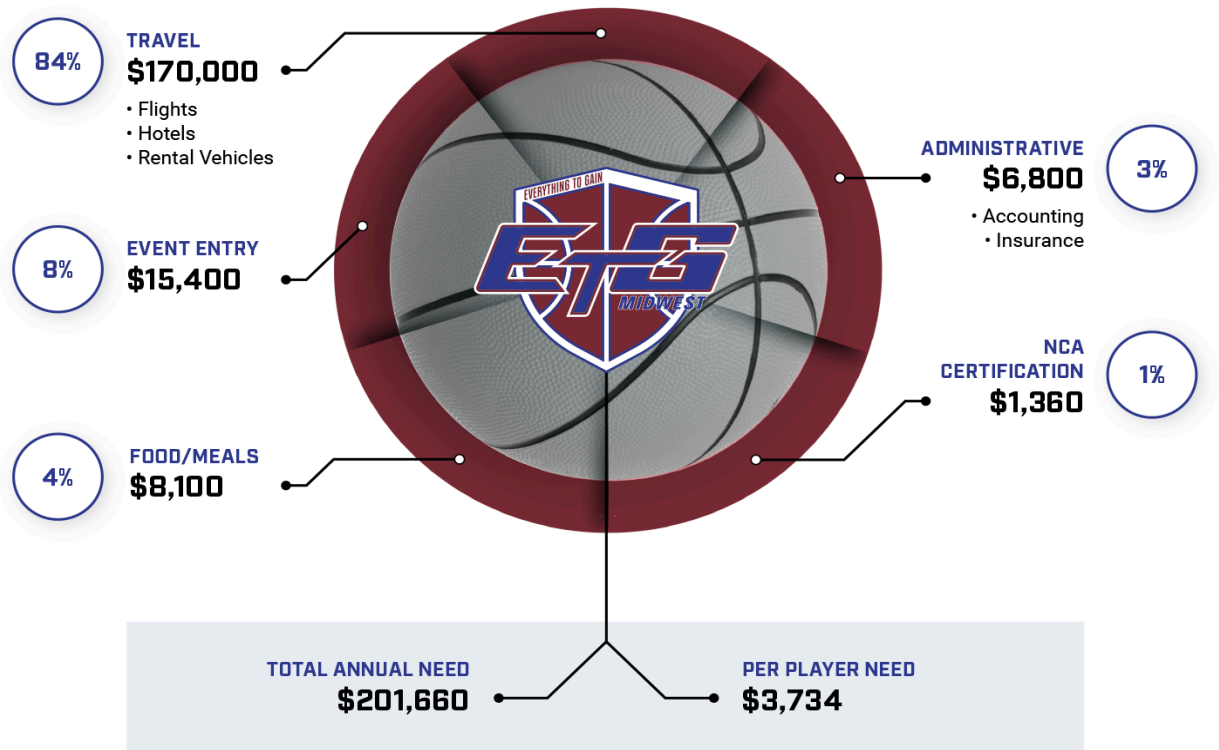
ETG Crusaders Alumni Newsletter

December 05, 2025

A Message from Coach Woodard

All: I hope you were able to take some time and enjoy the blessings of Thanksgiving with your family! As we head into the Christmas season I want to express how grateful and enriched I am to have had the privilege of working with so many of you! We have an incredible alumni group that spans the country and has had success in so many areas of life! If you can, take just a minute and look over our Alumni chart and see for yourself, the incredible and diverse stories of family and professional success that comprise the Crusader Alumni group!! Have a wonderful and blessed Christmas and a joyful Holiday season!

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Former Crusader Spotlight



Dominique Kelley: 2007 Crusader Alum

1. My experience playing for the Crusader program was everything I needed it to be—and then some. When I switched club programs as a junior in high school, I was nervous about stepping into a new environment and earning my place on a new team. What I found was more than just a team—I found a family. It was a true honor to be coached by Coach Woodard. He not only developed my skills and knowledge of the game, but also pushed me to grow as a person. He held me accountable, demanded effort and focus, and constantly reminded me that character off the court was just as important as performance on it. His belief in me helped shape my confidence and maturity in ways that went far beyond basketball. Playing with the girls that summer was something special. We didn't lose often, but even in those rare losses, we learned how to respond, support one another, and keep moving forward. Those experiences gave me some of the fondest memories I have from my time playing basketball. Looking back, my time with the Crusader program taught me what it means to truly be part of a team, to be accountable, and to play for something bigger than myself. Prior to joining the program, I was honestly burnt out on basketball and unsure if I still had the same love for the game. But being surrounded by such supportive coaches and



teammates reignited that passion in me. The Crusader program reminded me why I started playing in the first place—it brought back the joy, the excitement, and the sense of purpose that I had been missing. It strengthened not only my love for basketball but also my understanding that success isn't just about wins and losses—it's about growth, relationships, and the person you become along the way.

2. The advice I would give about the recruiting process is to simply enjoy it, because it all goes by so fast. Choose programs that truly choose you—places where you feel valued, supported, and connected. Make your decision based on the relationships you've built with the coaching staff and players, because in the end, that's what really matters. As life evolves, you want good people in your corner. My college coach is someone I still speak with regularly to get life advice and to bounce ideas off of, and that relationship has meant so much to me.
3. I think the game has evolved a lot since my days as a high school and collegiate basketball player—and that's okay. Growth and change are part of the natural progression of any sport. There are major differences now, like the implementation of the shot clock and the rise of NIL opportunities. Like anything new, these changes bring both positives and challenges. Ultimately, it all comes down to how you approach and adapt to them.
4. I currently serve as the CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Lincoln/Lancaster County. I reside in Lincoln with my husband, Clyde, and our two children, Kyrie (8) and Kennedy (3). In my spare time, I serve as the Girls Director for Supreme Basketball, and I love traveling with my family and watching NCAA women's basketball and the WNBA. Previously, I served as the head girls' basketball coach at Lincoln High School from 2018 to 2022. I'm most proud of the student-athletes I helped send to college during my time as a Link, and of guiding the team to the state finals in 2022.



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Former Crusader Spotlight



TJ Pugh: 1995 Crusader Alum

1. **Can you take a moment and describe your experience while playing with the Crusaders? Any significant moments or memories stand out?** As my kids frequently describe it, I played with the Crusaders in the 1900s (I suppose this is technically true as I played on Crusader teams from 1989-1994, but it hits different when they say it that way). I recall very little about any games or practices, but I have great memories of traveling with teammates/coaches. Many of the people I met on these teams are still the most influential people in my life today.
2. **What advice or insight could you give to student athletes and/or coaches regarding the recruiting process?** Let the work be the reward. Be obsessed with getting better every day in every way as an individual and as a team. Recruiting is a dynamic thing which will perpetually evolve, but the process of self-improvement is a constant. As opportunities present themselves, try to assess them beyond the 4-5 years you might commit in a college environment. How might these opportunities position you to achieve your goals beyond college or after basketball...because the ball stops bouncing for all of us at some point.



3. **How has grassroots basketball changed since your days with the Crusaders? Do you see the changes as mostly positive or negative?** Grassroots basketball has changed a lot since I played. It has changed from being a limited summer activity to what seems like a year round commercialized cycle. Although I like the fact that the game has grown tremendously and more kids are getting opportunities to play than ever before, the grassroots basketball circuits can be watered down and there is often too much emphasis placed on showcasing than actual instruction or development. Looks like an overall net negative to me.
4. **Tell us a little about your life now with basketball and then just family...basically a day in the life of TJ Pugh!!** I played four years at the University of Kansas where I proudly finished my career as one of the all-time winningest players in NCAA history. After my playing career was over, I went to medical school and trained to become a radiation oncologist specializing in the treatment of genitourinary and thoracic cancers. After stops in Houston and Denver, I was recently recruited back to Omaha to help the University of Nebraska Medical Center implement new cancer treatment technologies. My wife and I have four children (ages 11 thru 19) who occupy much of our time...now also including transporting them to and from Crusader practices!

