



Lily DeBell – Eighth Grader from Baltimore – Is Nation’s Top Student Entrepreneur

DeBell Wins \$25,000 Grand Prize at 2014 NFTE National Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge in Silicon Valley

Silicon Valley, CA – Oct. 10, 2014 – Eighth grader Lily DeBell from Baltimore, Maryland won the 2014 NFTE National Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge, presented by the [MasterCard Center for Inclusive Growth](#).

DeBell, who is still in middle school, finished ahead of 40 other student entrepreneurs from across the country – almost all of them were either High School or college age students.

DeBell a student at Roland Park Elementary Middle School was awarded the top prize for business, Lily’s Legwarmers. The prize package included \$5,000, a \$5,000 college scholarship, and a variety of business and technical products and services totaling approximately \$25,000.

Her award-winning business plan for Lily’s Legwarmers centers on proving all-natural, hand-made, customizable dancewear for young dancers.

“I am thrilled and honored to have won the National Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge,” DeBell said. “I’ve learned so much from my teachers, classmates and fellow competitors – I can’t wait get back to work on getting my great product to great dancers around the country.”

After the day-long competition, runners-up honors went to Ambar Ramero of Bridgeport, CT for her company Syles by Ambar – a successful online women’s vintage fashion site – and Jessie Horine from Fort Mill, SC for his company, SouthernFly – an outdoor lifestyle brand and fly-fishing provisioner. Both runners-up won prize packages worth \$5,000.

The winner of the fifth-annual NFTE Elevator Pitch Challenge, a separate, lead-in program to the National Challenge, was Jordan Harden of Ferguson, MO who took home \$2,500 for his magnetic shoelaces business, NEOString LLC. Additionally two runners-up won \$500. All of the winners of this challenge were selected by online public voting.

All of the finalists are business plan competition winners from their respective regions and were required to develop and present original business plans as part of their entrepreneurial studies at school, based on NFTE's award winning, experiential curriculum. NFTE students visit area businesses, play educational games and learn from hands-on activities to teach the entrepreneurial mindset as well as business concepts.

"We're exceptionally proud of all our students," said Amy Rosen, CEO of NFTE. "And we're delighted that, through entrepreneurship, we can give young people the tools and attitudes that will help them overcome adversity and address future personal, economic, community and global challenges."

Judging the final round of the top three teams were Amy Buckner Chowdhry, Founder & CEO, [AnswerLab](#), Frank Chen, Partner, [Andreesen Horowitz](#), Ron Garrow, Chief Human Resources Officer, [MasterCard](#), Kyle Wong Co-Founder & CEO, [Pixlee](#) and NFTE alumnus, and Jason Young Co-Founder & CEO of [MindBlown Labs](#).

Student photos, more detailed biographies and information about their businesses is available.

Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship –

Since 1987, the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) has taught and inspired more than 500,000 young people to pursue educational opportunities, start their own businesses, and succeed in life. By providing entrepreneurship education programs relevant to the real world, NFTE empowers students to own their education and future success. NFTE has programs in 19 U.S. communities and 12 countries. To learn more visit www.nfte.com, like us on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/NFTE and follow us on Twitter at @NFTE

About the MasterCard Center for Inclusive Growth –

The MasterCard Center for Inclusive Growth was created to foster collaborative relationships between academia, governments, nonprofits, the social design community, and the private sector. Through the advancement of research and strategic philanthropic investments, we support and enable those historically excluded from financial services and serve as a catalyst for change. Follow us on Twitter @CNTR4growth.

###