



## Teens Mean Business As They Compete for Cash and Prizes

### *NFTE's 2013 National Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge finals feature an appearance by Sean "Diddy" Combs*

**NEW YORK – Sept. 16, 2013** – The savviest young entrepreneurial minds will gather and compete at the [Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship's \(NFTE\), 2013 National Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge](#), presented by [MasterCard](#). On October 3<sup>rd</sup> at *The Times Center* in New York City, 39 students representing 35 businesses from around the country will contend for top honors and for the chance to win over \$25,000 in cash and prizes to help bring their business ideas to life or advance their education. The evening will also feature an appearance by all-star entrepreneur Sean "Diddy" Combs.

"I am honored to be a part of NFTE's National Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge which gives students an opportunity to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams and the tools they need to become the CEOs of their future," said Sean "Diddy" Combs, Chairman and CEO of Bad Boy Worldwide. "I learned entrepreneurship the hard way. This program teaches our children the real life skills they need to be successful. I wish I had gone to NFTE as a kid!"

The competition finalists, all winners from NFTE regional programs around the country, were required to develop and present original business plans as part of their entrepreneurial studies. NFTE students receive hands-on training in launching a business and learn the real-world relevance of math, reading and writing. The NFTE curriculum reinforces students' critical thinking skills and provides them with tools to help them take control of their futures and think entrepreneurially.

"MasterCard is committed to supporting NFTE in its mission and believes in the power of entrepreneurship as a path to full financial inclusion for young people," said [Patricia Devereux](#), Executive Director, Corporate Philanthropy & Citizenship at MasterCard. "Entrepreneurship and business literacy education spur a continuous cycle of learning and innovation that will bring sustainable job creation and economic opportunity. We are honored to help further that mission."

The three finalists will emerge from a full day of competition and will then square off for the grand prize by presenting their business plans for an audience of 400 invited guests and distinguished panel of judges including:

- o **Michael Fertik, Founder and CEO, Reputation.com**
- o **Pat Kiernan, Anchor, NY1 News**



- o **Gary VonderHaar, Group Executive, Enterprise Architecture, MasterCard Worldwide**
- o **Jennifer Pate Gilbert, Founder and Chief Visionary Officer, Save The Date ®**
- o **Jasmine Lawrence, NFTE Alumna and Founder of EDEN BodyWorks**

"We're excited to witness the passion, innovation and drive of our top young CEOs from around the country and the opportunity for them to not only present their business plans but to advance their lives," said Amy Rosen, President & CEO of NFTE. "These young entrepreneurs are proof that economic hardships are no obstacle to pursuing your dreams and that taking ownership of your future is empowering."

The following three students are examples of the 2013 National Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge competitors:

**Dagim, Girma, 17**

**Alexandria, VA – “The Audible”**

Since Dagim is so enthusiastic about watching, playing, and discussing sports, he wanted to turn his passion into an online blog. Today, The Audible is currently one of the most popular websites for young people in Northern Virginia, with over 3,000 unique visitors per month, over 400 rave reviews an accompanying mobile app, which provides a community where high school sports fans can engage with one another while receiving the latest sporting news from featured young writers. Dagim credits NFTE with helping him improve his communication skills greatly and ridding him of stage fright. He is hoping to study Business Finances/Administration at a school like Boston College or UVA.

**Antonia Castro, 18**

**Los Angeles, CA – “Cool Sleeve”**

Before taking the NFTE course, Tony was a young girl working a part-time job and learning how to manage her spending money. She was planning to become a lawyer but now is determined to become a successful businesswoman. Since taking NFTE she has developed determination and confidence and has created Cool Sleeve, a heat-resistant sleeve worn by servers that can improve restaurant service by making the service faster and safer for employees. Tony would like to study at East LA Community College before transferring to UC-Berkley.



**Muhand Jumah, 17  
Brooklyn, NY – “Teaching-Time”**

Teaching-Time is a unique service that will reduce the time wasted in class with taking attendance, managing lateness, and providing hall passes. A self-taught computer programmer, Muhand created facial recognition software that recognizes hall passes, late passes, and who has come to class. After coming to the U.S. only four years ago from Iraq, he currently attends the College of Staten Island and is studying his dream major, Computer Science. In the future he would like to be the next big software innovator, and he wants to help people start their business with NFTE.

The 2013 NFTE National Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge grand-prize winner will take home a total of \$25,000 in venture capital and prizes including a technology suite, and two round-trip tickets on Southwest Airlines. Two runners-up will each win \$5,000 and two round-trip tickets on Southwest Airlines.

**About the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship**

Too many young people today drop out of school and struggle to break the cycle of poverty. Since 1987, the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) has been inspiring 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 educations in and out of the classroom and to find their own path to success. Hundreds of thousands of students have discovered opportunity all around them through entrepreneurship via thousands of certified educators worldwide. NFTE supports active programs in 19 U.S. locations and 13 countries around the world. Entrepreneurs are a powerful driver of economic growth and NFTE sows the seeds of innovation in students worldwide. To learn more visit [www.nfte.com](http://www.nfte.com), like us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/NFTE](https://www.facebook.com/NFTE) or follow us on Twitter at @NFTE.

**About MasterCard**

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