

AN INDEPENDENT SUPPLEMENT BY MEDIAPLANET TO USA TODAY

Open innovation
Stepping outside
the box

Entrepreneurship
Teaching the next
generation

Social change
How technology
can save lives

**MEDIA
PLANET**

March 2011

THE POWER OF INNOVATION

MAKING IDEAS PROFIT

CEO of Sprint **Dan Hesse** talks about
how wireless innovation is making a difference



PHOTO: SPRINT CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

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INSPIRATION

Question: How can we stop at-risk young people in urban areas from dropping out of high school?

Answer: Teach them to be the CEOs of their own lives!

Empowering today's youth

CHANGE

Chicago native Rodney Walker faced obstacles that would have defeated most of us.

At age five, Rodney and his siblings entered the foster care system, and over the next 13 years he was placed in 15 different homes. For a brief time, he was even homeless. All those moves meant 10 different schools. Connecting to teachers, role models, and his school work was next to impossible. Rodney was on the verge of dropping out when he discovered

the entrepreneurship class at his final high school.

The Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) inspired Rodney to pursue educational opportunities, start his own business, and succeed in life. This amazing organization provides entrepreneurship education programs designed to convert “street smarts” to “business smarts.” The program inspires young people to identify their unique talents and to build a business around them. Ultimately, NFTE students become their own CEO, aspiring to greater heights than they had ever imagined. As



RODNEY WALKER inspiring others with his story. PHOTO: NFTE

Rodney says, “I create opportunities for myself instead of looking toward other people to create those opportunities.”

Ideas become reality

Rodney and a friend with a background in music combined their creative skills to create their plan for Forever Life Music & Video Productions, which makes customized digital videos with original music and songs for special occasions. After investing many hours in their business and polishing the plan, they won \$5,000 in NFTE's 2008 National Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge to advance their business and educational goals.

Now a junior at Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA, Rodney runs his business on campus and con-

tinues to maintain a GPA of over 3.5. And with such a compelling story to tell, Rodney has recently begun to do motivational speaking around the country.

Rodney says of his future, “I still live amongst the burdens of my life. The only difference is that I now have been exposed to an avenue—entrepreneurship—that will lead to my life-long prosperity and I continue to follow that path.”

To learn more about NFTE, visit www.nfte.com.

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