

# nfte! SOUTH REGION YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHALLENGE

## The Road to Nationals June 3, 2023

Presented by:

EY  
Santander Bank

Associate support from:  
Citi Foundation



# Welcome

Hello NFTE Students, Teachers, Volunteers, Staff and Supporters,

Thank you for joining us for NFTE South's Annual Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge!

NFTE activates the entrepreneurial mindset and builds startup skills in youth from under-resourced communities to ensure their success and to create a more vibrant society. The team at NFTE South has done a fantastic job this year in delivering the transformative power of entrepreneurship to over 4,200 students across the region! We continue to be one of the fastest growing regions in the nation and expect to reach 8,000 students per year in NFTE South by 2027.

Today, we are proud to showcase the top five NFTE South teams and celebrate all our NFTE students across Texas. The teams that will be presenting have been selected from 523 teams across 31 schools, and will represent our region in the National Competition being held in New York City. To have made it this far is a remarkable accomplishment, so we want to congratulate all presenting teams. Your clarity of vision, and your confidence in presenting your businesses, is a demonstration of your commitment to the bright future you are creating for yourselves. We are thrilled to be celebrating YOU today and we will be cheering you on as you continue to the National Competition.

To our guests, please get to know our students who are presenting today. Visit the Expo booths and strike up a conversation with our teachers and volunteers who bring this program to life. Find a NFTE staff member and ask how you can get involved as a volunteer, mentor, or judge. Please also consider donating to support the NFTE program. Join us as we help students realize that they can create their own futures, maximize their potential, and become whatever they choose for themselves.

We could not do what we do without the support of our NFTE community. Thank you to our NFTE teachers, administrators, volunteers, mentors, judges, and guest speakers. It is because of their generosity of time, energy, and expertise that our students continue to thrive in the NFTE curriculum. We would also like to express our thanks to the NFTE South Advisory Board, whose leadership and commitment to NFTE endure year after year.

Thank you for joining us today and thank you for believing in NFTE.

Your NFTE South Team,

Trish McKeel, Regional Director, NFTE South  
Jenn Lunt, Lead Program Associate, NFTE South  
Cheyanne Ornelas, Volunteer Coordinator - NFTE South and West Regions

# Agenda

## NFTE South Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge

Saturday, June 3, 2023

### Emcee

Thomas Vo, **Reheats**

NFTE Class of 2022, NFTE National Challenge finalist

### Judges

James Johnson, **Comerica Bank**

Evelyn J. Solorzano, **Bank of America**

Courtney Thurman, **Prosperity Bank**

### Student Finalists

**Temperature Control Sleeve** - Aniyah Poole - Price Career Institute (presenting by video)

**Everything Chickens** - Emerson Oborn - Henry W. Longfellow

**Benchi** - Shannon Ramirez - Grand Prairie School for the Highly Gifted

**Million Dollar Sacrifices** - Triston Toliver - Lancaster High School

**E-Z Form** - Zachary Moskowitz - Hillcrest High School

### Volunteer of the Year Awards

Trish McKeel, **Regional Director, NFTE South**

### Special Guest

Dr. Usamah Rodgers, **Superintendent, Desoto ISD**

### Winner Announcements and Closing

Dr. J. D. LaRock, **President & CEO, NFTE**

Whose tomorrow  
will you change  
today?

We are committed to helping underserved students develop the entrepreneurial mindsets and skills needed to thrive in the working world of tomorrow.

Learn more at [ey.com/us/cr](https://ey.com/us/cr)



The better the question. The better the answer.  
The better the world works.



Building a better  
working world

# Master of Ceremonies

## Thomas Vo

NFTE Class of 2022

Founder, Reheats



Thomas used to work for his uncle, roofing, building fences, and even just digging. But in the cold months, his hands would get so cold they turned numb. Thomas realized this problem probably affected a lot of outdoor workers, and he created Reheats, electric heated gloves. Often, workers' gloves are bulky, without much grip, and Reheats provide a sleek design with electric padding for comfort and warmth, and grippy material running down the palm. Reheats' electric heated gloves are perfect for anyone who enjoys the cold outdoors and wants to keep their hands toasty. Thomas is attending the Naval Academy next year and is planning on majoring in electrical engineering.

## Youth Business Expo

featuring students from the Grand Prairie School for the Highly Gifted and Nimitz High School

### Startup Tech

We-Cycle: Bronson Cook and Kyson Yi - Startup Tech Challenge 1st place winners

Smart Organs: Aniv Patel and Shyam Patel

### Entrepreneurship 1

Horizons: Shiv Patel - challenge semi finalist

Flair: Georgie Gibernan and Natasha Mahmood - challenge semi finalist

S(H)E Defense: Paisley Lansdown and Faith Osuma

Baddie Baskets: Myleah Franklin

Detect-A-Ray: Abril Cardona and Xiomara Ortiz (Nimitz HS)

### Entrepreneurship 2

TechByte: Nabil Mahmood -E2 Challenge 1st place winner

# Student Finalists

## **Temperature Control Sleeve** - Aniyah Poole - *Price Career Institute*

People with injuries have discomfort along with muscle soreness and don't always have access to ice or heat therapy to reduce it. Temperature Compression Sleeve provides a way for people with muscle soreness and injuries to have heat and cold therapy when they're on-the-go.

## **Everything Chickens** - Emerson Oborn - *Henry W. Longfellow School*

My business provides 2-week old hatchling, mixed breed chickens in the Dallas, TX area to support growing demand for backyard chickens.

## **Benchi** - Shannon Ramirez - *Grand Prairie School for the Highly Gifted*

A dynamic 3-in-1 bench that is not only comfortable, but provides temporary shelter, particularly for the unhoused. The bench can be used by anyone. Made from durable and comfortable material, it is the epitome of a classic bench.

## **Million Dollar Sacrifices** - Triston Toliver - *Lancaster High School*

Our streetwear clothing line is designed to capture the unique style and values of Generation Z while promoting a mindset of wealth creation through hard work, innovation, and creativity, with a focus on quality, sustainability, and authenticity. Our designs are edgy, comfortable, and versatile, inspiring the next generation of leaders to express their individuality and take charge of their futures.

## **E-Z Form** - Zachary Moskowitz - *Hillcrest High School*

Our company is an upcoming leading provider of form filling software solutions designed to simplify the process of filling out forms for businesses and organizations. Our software is highly customizable and can be used to collect information from customers, employees, or other stakeholders through a range of data collection methods. With a focus on user-friendly design and efficiency, our software can help businesses save time and reduce costs by automating the form filling process.

# Judges

## **James Johnson**

**SVP, Retail Risk Management and Market Operations Director**

*Comerica Bank*

James Johnson is an experienced risk professional serving as the SVP, Retail Risk Management and Market Operations Director at Comerica Bank. James is a technical, skilled, intuitive, and innovative leader with more than 15 years of experience in the bank regulation, operations, consumer lending, financial analysis, and enterprise risk management. He is a consistent top performer with exceptional interpersonal, verbal and written communication, and analytical skills enabling the development of strong rapport across all levels of an organization.

Previously, he has held roles in 1st Line Risk Management at First Republic Bank; Enterprise Risk Management at Prosper Marketplace; in Risk Management and Internal Audit at Bank of the West; in Bank Examination at the FDIC; and Branch Operations & Lending at Wells Fargo.

James holds designations as a Certified in Risk and Information Systems Control (CRISC); Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE); Certified Financial Services Auditor (CFSA); and Certified Business Continuity Professional (CBCP). He earned his Graduate Certificate in Banking from the University of Washington; an MBA from the University of Phoenix; and an undergraduate in Business Administration.



# Judges, *continued*

## **Evelyn J. Solorzano**

Vice President,  
**Small Business Community Officer**  
*Bank of America*

Evelyn Solorzano is a Small Business Community Officer working with business owners in the North Texas market. Dedicated to supporting women and minority business owners for the past 6 years, Evelyn finds solutions to help them achieve their unique evolving goals. To bridge the gap on Small Business Financial Literacy, Evelyn conducts financial education classes across the community utilizing all of our educational resources. In addition, as a North Texas CDFI Ambassador, Evelyn works closely with those institutions to identify ways to support entrepreneurs with access to capital.



Evelyn joined Bank of America in 2004 and throughout her 18 year journey, she has held different positions within the company. She is not only passionate about helping business clients, she is highly committed to the communities she serves. She is engaged in the community as an active member of local Chambers of Commerce including the Ft. Worth Hispanic and the Dallas Regional Chambers, working side by side with various non-profit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Women's Business Development Center, Minority Business Development Agency Dallas (MBDA) and local business organizations such as National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO).

Evelyn was born and raised in Colombia and migrated to the United States with her family at the age of 13. She obtained her Bachelor of Business Administration and a Master of Science in Finance from University of Texas at Dallas. She is married with two young children and in her spare time loves to dance, spend time with family, play baseball and participate in volunteer activities with her two boys.

## **Courtney Thurman**

**Banking Center President,  
Commercial Lending**  
*Prosperity Bank*

With over 23 years of banking experience, Courtney has grown from working as a teller in Enid, Oklahoma to serving as a commercial lender servicing Dallas/Fort Worth. She is passionate about helping others, whether through providing financial literacy resources or providing funding through the bank. Courtney has been with Prosperity Bank for over 20 years and held six positions during that time, constantly looking to grow and develop.

Her other passions are being a certified life coach, helping others with positivity, inspiration and empowerment, and serving as a board member of EWL – Fort Worth.



*The 2022 finalists and judge panel (c) Magaly Abbott*

# Special Guest

**Usamah Rodgers, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools  
*DeSoto ISD*

Dr. Usamah Rodgers was recently named Superintendent of Schools in DeSoto ISD. Prior to being named superintendent she served as a deputy chief in the second largest school district in Texas. Dr. Rodgers is a thought leader, collaborator, innovator, designer and disruptor. Most notably Usamah Rodgers is highly regarded for her work designing, launching and leading one of largest implementations of the Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) program in the United States. Her work has created an opportunity for thousands of students to earn a high school diploma, an Associate degree and industry recognized certifications.

Dr. Usamah Rodgers is a dynamic educator with a career that spans more than 20 years. Dr. Rodgers was named as the best K-12 Education Leader in 2020 by The Edvocate, a national organization that is devoted to advocating for education equity, reform and innovation. She was named Teacher of the Year in 1998 and Principal of the Year in 2009. Usamah has also received awards from various organizations namely the NAACP, National Council of Negro Women and the University of Texas at Austin. Usamah is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. Throughout her distinguished career Dr. Rodgers has presented at numerous national, state and local conferences speaking to thousands regarding the importance of access, advocacy, equity and excellence.



2022 Challenge highlights  
(c) Magaly Abbott

# NFTE South Advisory Board

**Adrienne Palmer** (Chair), Entrepreneur

**John Antos**, Value Creation Group, Inc.

**Murray Covens**, North Texas Nonprofit Resources

**Michael Dominguez**, Associated Luxury Hotels International

**Bill Kling**, Moonlight Ranch Winery

**Terri Maxwell**, Share On Purpose

**Lisette Mendez**, AT&T Finance

**Shannon Smith**, EY

# Volunteers of the Year

We are immensely grateful to all of our volunteers. This year, we are especially proud to celebrate our **Individual Volunteer of the Year, John Antos**. John has been a NFTE staple volunteer for the past 14 years, during which he has affected countless student and parent lives, as well as helped grow many NFTE staff in the way of non-profits and volunteerism. John has always been selfless in his giving of his most precious resource: time. He spends time with others to help make the NFTE difference, as he recognizes the essential need for filling the opportunity gap society has created. He recently had a new grandson and while he shared that info with great love and enthusiasm, still made himself immediately available to serve on the NFTE Advisory Board and volunteered to mentor students throughout the spring competition series. John will be rotating off the NFTE Advisory Board this summer, and while he will leave impossibly big shoes to fill, we know he will always be a phone call away. John is a fiercely energetic and loyal supporter of all that NFTE does and we are honored to recognize him today.



And congratulations to our **Corporate Volunteer of the Year, Mary Kay, Inc.** Mary Kay has been an influential partner of NFTE since 2019. This past year, Mary Kay held a Day of Innovation with students from Dallas, and throughout the World Series of Innovation, Mary Kay encouraged students to develop solutions to further the conservation and/or protection of the world's marine ecosystems and coastal communities. Mary Kay volunteers supported our NFTE teachers and students as coaches as they worked through their ideas and business plans. One of the most powerful moments of the year was seeing and feeling the excitement from students as they listened and learned from these business professionals on Innovation Day! The 23 Mary Kay volunteers left our students in attendance feeling confident and empowered, and we are proud to be able to honor Mary Kay for their commitment to NFTE's youth.

Proud to do our part to help bright minds achieve bright futures.

NFTE is dedicated to empowering students and giving them a chance at a brighter future.

An idea we can all get behind.

At the Citi Foundation, we commend NFTE on their efforts and are pleased to support their invaluable work.

Citi Foundation



# Thanks To Our Event Sponsors

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## Get Involved

Learn more about NFTE

Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) ignites the entrepreneurial mindset with unique learning experiences that empower students to own their futures. A global nonprofit founded in 1987, NFTE provides high-quality entrepreneurship education to middle school, high school, and postsecondary students.

NFTE brings the power of entrepreneurship to students, regardless of family income, community resources, special needs, gender identity, race, or ethnicity. NFTE has educated more than a million students, delivering our programs in school, out of school, in-person, online, or through hybrid models. To learn more, visit [www.nfte.com](http://www.nfte.com).

[JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY! CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

# NFTE National Supporters

Thanks to the commitment of NFTE's national donors, an increasing number of young people are prepared with the entrepreneurial mindset and startup skills required to succeed in today's innovation economy.

Entrepreneurial Leaders (\$1,000,000+)

Citi Foundation



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## Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship

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