

nfte! CAPITAL REGION YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHALLENGE

The Road to Nationals

June 13, 2023

Presented by EY

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Whiteford

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Welcome

Agenda

Dear NFTE Family,

Welcome to the NFTE Capital Region Finals, part of our Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge series. We come together tonight to celebrate our young entrepreneurs who have risen to the top of the competition. There is no better testament to the power of our programs than the students and alumni you will meet tonight.

NFTE aims to ignite the entrepreneurial mindset with unique learning experiences that empower students to own their futures. Through all our courses, students work to put together their very first business plan. Which, if you are in business, you know is no small feat! Tonight, you will see just a fraction of the business plans our over 2,000 students across the region put together this school year.

While naturally, the students are the star of tonight's show, they stand here because of the hard work of our teachers and volunteers. Our teachers work tirelessly to bring our curriculum to life. That's because NFTE teachers know our program can offer their students transformational skills and opportunities. NFTE staff always call our volunteer experiences "the special sauce." Because when you get to see students interact, practice their pitches, or learn about a new career pathway through interacting with one of our volunteers, it's magical.

We encourage you to join us in our movement to build a diverse pipeline of local, young, and talented business leaders who will one day shape the Capital Region. By volunteering or donating, you can make a difference in a student's life. As you can see, there is plenty of talent. All we need to do is give these young people the skills and opportunities they need to flourish.

Warm regards,

Meg Stewart
Executive Director, NFTE Capital Region
MegS@nfte.com

NFTE Capital Region Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge Finals

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

- Emcee** Jennifer Castro, **NFTE Class of 2018**
HR Management Specialist, Arlington County
- Judges** Ann Balduzzi, **TEDCO**
Mary Blackford, **Market 7**
Keith James, **Coalition Properties Group**
Keerthi Santosh Varier, **EY**
- Finalists** **Compel Comics** - Rommie Hooper
*Frederick Douglass High School,
Upper Marlboro (Prince George's County), MD*
Odorase - Carter Lawson
*Francis Scott Key Elementary Middle School,
Baltimore, MD*
Photo Rely - Jkahi Booker
*Edmondson Westside High School,
Baltimore, MD*
- Corporate and Individual Volunteer of the Year Awards**
Individual: Phil McNeill
Corporate: Slalom, award accepted by Yolanda Scott
- Keynote Speaker** Diana Dibble, CEO, **Tripod Coaching & Consulting,**
and President & Co-Founder, **Design to Delivery, Inc.**
- 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

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



Building a better working world

Student Finalists

Compel Comics - Rommie Hooper

Compel Comics is a comic book publisher that focuses on character devolvement in a ever evolving world, with the simultaneous goal of audience inclusion and relatable real world adversities. Compel Comics prides itself on building a series that will focus on characters facing adversity, trauma, and real-world problems.

Odorase - Carter Lawson

Oderase is an air freshener, which when sprayed will leave behind a light fragrance while making sure that you do not smell the odors again. It uses a molecule called cyclodextrin which is also in Febreze and may also be found in some starches (mainly corn starch). My mission is to provide you with a non-toxic, non-flammable, lightly scented, odor eliminator, so you can breathe easy and help the environment.

Photo Rely - Jkahi Booker

Many people cannot afford professional photographers for their events and parties. My mission is to sell my picture taking and photo/video editing service to anyone and everyone.

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.

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Emcee

Jennifer Castro
NFTE Class of 2018
HR Associate, Greenbrook TMS

We're excited to welcome back Jennifer Castro as our emcee!

Jennifer was a finalist of DC Metro's 2018 Challenge and semi-finalist of that year's National Challenge, as co-founder of Flow Comfort, a subscription box for women that delivers the preferred choice of sanitary products right to the customer's door.



Currently studying Business Administration, she works as an HR associate for Greenbrook TMS, one of the leading companies in TMS therapy. While she is no longer involved with Flow Comfort, her entrepreneurial mindset is active and going strong as she is currently in the process of obtaining her Real Estate License in the state of Maryland. With so many members of her family in the business of home remodeling, she's eager to jump in and join the Real Estate Market.



Judges

Ann Balduzzi
Managing Director,
Entrepreneur & Ecosystem Empowerment
TEDCO

Anne began her career as an early Internet pioneer working at Apple, AOL (when it was a start-up), and Viewtron, an AT&T joint venture that launched the first consumer online service in North America. After working in Silicon Valley and launching Apple's first online service, Anne returned to the East Coast and founded Accelerate Partners, where she advised a wide range of technology startups.

Anne later founded SameGrain, an award-winning AI enabled platform. In this role, she won pitch competitions, and secured millions in seed funding as well as Phase I and II SBIR grants.

Recognized as a Top Women in Tech, Anne holds a patent on data match analysis and is a speaker and author on AI and entrepreneurship topics. She is a member of Mindshare, Leadership Maryland, and sits on the Board of FITCI, and is currently TEDCO's Managing Director of Entrepreneur & Ecosystem Empowerment (E3).



Our judges, 2022 (c) Exposure Photography

Judges, continued

Mary Blackford
Founder
Market 7

Mary Blackford is the Founder of Market 7, Washington, DC's first Black-owned food hall that features Black-owned food and lifestyle businesses for the purpose of alleviating food and retail deserts in DC.

Mary graduated from Babson College with a BS in Business Management. As a student she also taught entrepreneurship courses to high school students in Ghana and South Africa. She began her career in the socially responsible finance industry as an Analyst. In 2013, Mary became one of the founding chapter leaders of the DC Chapter of Women Investing for a Sustainable Economy (WISE), a women-led professional group committed to providing resources to women working within the impact investing industry. In the summer of 2017 she launched her most recent venture Market 7. Market 7 has worked with 60 Black-owned businesses in the DC area to create alternative community pop-up markets that include fresh food, lifestyle products, and home essentials in Ward 7 (DC). Market 7 is currently building a new 7,000 sq ft food hall slated to open this year. Market 7 has been highlighted by the DC Mayor Muriel Browser, *The Washington Post*, *Forbes*, *CNBC*, *Black Enterprise*, *The Washingtonian*, *Essence Magazine*, *NBC*, *FOX*, and *WUSA*.

In 2019, Mary created a partnership with Whole Foods Market (Mid-Atlantic) to bring more Black-owned brands to their stores. Mary has also developed training partnerships with Google and the Greater Washington Urban League to provide entrepreneurial training in underserved communities in 2020-2021.

Mary is a proud NFTE alumna from the class of 2006.



Keith James
Managing Partner
Coalition Properties Group

Bold. Daring. Charismatic. Keith James is the true essence of a go-getter, achieving success decades before his time. Born in Northern Mississippi, Keith spent his youth traveling around the United States playing in AAU basketball tournaments weekend after weekend. This exposure brought Keith the global perspective needed to see that the world is bigger than your back yard. After graduating from high school, Keith attended Tuskegee University, earning his bachelor's in Business Administration with a focus in Marketing.

As a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Keith has met with some of the most successful men in real estate, obtaining bits of knowledge from mentorship along the way. The home buying process is an exciting time for families. Research shows families spend hours on the internet before meeting with a real estate professional. Keith knows that feeling all too well. The excitement of his first home purchase was a major investment he made at the age of 23 and he turned it into an income generating property. That purchase led to another purchase... and it was too late; Keith caught the real estate investor bug!

As a real estate agent, and speaker, Keith's passion in life is to be the bridge to help people get to where they want to go. He was ranked #2 in PropertySpark's list of top 20 Washington D.C. real estate agents on social media, and Coalition Properties Group was recognized as one of the top real estate teams in the DMV area by the *Washingtonian* in 2022.

Keith serves on the NFTE Capital Region Advisory Board. He enjoys spending time with his family, eating at the best restaurants (ask about his list) and traveling the world.



Judges, continued

Keerthi Santosh Varier
US-West Corporate Responsibility Leader
EY

Keerthi is a product and program manager for ideas that are in the early stages of the innovation life cycle. She helps teams crystallize their idea's value proposition, create a Minimum Viable Product, and refine their pitches before they stand in front of investors. She also collaborates with various Startup Ecosystems to identify partnership and startup growth potential.



Keerthi's background spans from coding to management consulting to starting new businesses, across the US, UK, and Asia in multiple sectors. She is with EY's Global Innovation and is based out of Maryland. In her spare time, she enjoys reading and gardening.

Recent accomplishments include - Judge for PitchGeorge and New Venture Competition at George Washington University, Judge for NFTE DC Metro Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge in 2022, Keynote Speaker for IEEE WIE International Leadership Summit 2020, Design Thinking Facilitator for NFTE World Series of Innovation etc.

NFTE Capital Region Advisory Board

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Keith James
Coalition Properties Group

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, Phil McNeill**. Phil has been a long time volunteer and champion of NFTE, contributing to the Capital Region in a variety of ways. He has served as a mentor and coach for dozens of students, and has served on the advisory board for our region. He is always willing to support a young entrepreneur and is incredibly giving of his time. Even when he is not in the area, he does virtual coaching sessions to ensure his students get what they need. We thank Phil for all he has done for NFTE and for his commitment to supporting young entrepreneurs across the Capital region.



And congratulations to our **Corporate Volunteer of the Year, Slalom**. Slalom has been an amazing new partner for the Capital Region. They have supported both our BizCamp programs this past summer and coaching days for our Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge. Slalom volunteers have been outstanding in working with our students, and we are grateful to partner with you all. Thank you to everyone at Slalom for your partnership!



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.

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

Highlights from 2022

Keynote



Diana Dibble
CEO, **Tripod Coaching & Consulting**
President & Co-Founder, **Design To Delivery, Inc.**



Diana Dibble is the CEO of Tripod Coaching & Consulting LLC™, which opened in 2022. It was founded from her passion for business operations, which she has been doing for decades. Tripod provides business operations services and they are experts in Planning for the “What If”™. Throughout her career Diana has found that revenue generating activities are usually a business’ priority. However, focusing solely on revenue may be killing the company. That’s where Tripod comes in. They are really good at what they do, and they make biz ops fun... or at least more fun.

In addition to Tripod, Diana is the President/Co-Founder of Design To Delivery Inc (D2DInc). D2DInc is a government contracting firm founded in 2001. They provide acquisition and program management support services to US federal civilian and defense agencies. D2DInc recently launched the Small Business Superstore as a new line of business to resell products to the federal government.

Throughout her career, Diana has been recognized with local and national industry awards including the Enterprising Women’s 2020 Enterprising Women of the Year award, the 2022 NAWBO Woman Business Owner of the Year award as a top 3 finalist, and the NAWBO Greater DC 2023 Entrepreneur of the Year award as a top 3 finalist. D2DInc has also received numerous awards since its founding including being recognized on Inc Magazine’s INC 5000 list of the fastest growing US privately held firms for 4 consecutive years.

In addition to running multiple successful businesses, Diana finds time to give back to the community. She is an active member in several business associations, and volunteers for local and national non-profits like NFTE. She is an engaging speaker and regularly speaks at events and conferences, and on panels, webinars, and podcasts. Diana is also a brain tumor survivor. She shares her story to bring awareness and hope, and to fundraise for various medical non-profits and clinical trials.

(c) Exposure Photography

Thanks To Our Event Sponsors

This event would not be possible without the generosity of the sponsors below, whose commitment of time, talent and treasure to support NFTE students and teachers is greatly appreciated and much applauded.



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+)

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Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship

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