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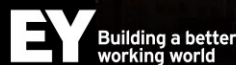
NATIONAL YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHALLENGE

October 10, 2024



Citi Foundation

Presented by



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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.

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Judges



Kira Cordoba-Brown (she/her)
Managing Director
Head of Talent and Diversity, Equity
& Inclusion - Banking & International
Citi

Kira Cordoba-Brown is the Head of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Talent Management for Citi's Banking & International, Client Organization, and Legacy Franchises. In this global role, Kira leads the design, implementation, and oversight of key diversity and talent management strategies, ensuring that Citi's divisions are equipped with the tools and programs needed to foster an inclusive and high-performing workforce. She partners closely with senior business leaders to drive initiatives

across outreach, metrics, evaluation, communications, and diversity training.

With over 18 years at Citi, Kira has made a significant impact across various human resources functions, including talent development, diversity recruiting, and program management. Her past roles include managing Citi's consumer banking analyst and associate programs and driving diversity recruitment strategies to attract top talent to Citi's prestigious analyst and associate programs. Additionally, as a diversity manager in the Office of Global Workforce Diversity, she was instrumental in creating strategies that bolstered Citi's commitment to inclusion and equity across its global workforce.

Before joining Citi, Kira was a research associate at PEA Capital, a subsidiary of Allianz Dresdner Asset Management. In this role, she conducted in-depth fundamental research, developed proprietary financial models, and provided strategic insights for the investment management team, working closely with company leadership to deliver actionable industry information.

Kira graduated magna cum laude from the Metropolitan College of New York with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. She resides in Queens, NY, with her husband, Reginald, and their daughter, Hailey.



Isabel Cruz (she/her)
Executive Vice President
Chief People Officer
PayPal

As Executive Vice President and Chief People Officer, Isabel Cruz is responsible for leading PayPal's global Human Resources (HR) efforts to attract, retain, and develop leaders and employees throughout their careers at PayPal, as well as the Company's Real Estate strategy. Isabel serves as the Executive Sponsor of the PayPal Community Impact program. In this capacity, she inspires and enables more than 80% of PayPal employees to further the company's mission through

volunteerism and giving.

Isabel joined PayPal from Walmart, where she was most recently SVP and People Leader for the Company's Global Technology, Services, and Corporate teams, leading talent strategies and people initiatives supporting more than 30,000 associates globally. Isabel previously led the people function for Walmart's U.S. eCommerce portfolio, including setting the talent strategy for multiple brands and startups, mergers and divestitures and the integration of the U.S. eCommerce business into Walmart's omnichannel U.S. business. She joined Walmart following a 20-year career with General Electric (GE) which included roles with GE Capital, GE Power, NBC Universal and Global Headquarters. Her specialized expertise includes global workforce management, business transformation, organizational development, diversity and inclusion, mergers and acquisitions, leadership development, employee engagement and succession planning.

Isabel earned her Master of Human Resource Management from Rutgers University and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication from Fairfield University.

Here's to strengthening communities

In keeping with Citi's mission of enabling growth and economic progress, Citi applauds Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship for helping to ignite the entrepreneurial mindset that empower students to own their future.

Thank you for bringing positive change that strengthens communities.



Judges, cont'd.



Darius Davie (he/him)
Co-Founder and Creative Director
Groom Guy
NFTE Class of 2007

Darius Davie is an entrepreneur, stylist, and award-winning creative director who has been successful at showcasing a new pathway to modern grooming and luxury hospitality. Based in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, Darius has built a powerhouse reputation for innovation, quality, and strategic vision.

Launching his career in 2016, Darius, a New York-native, initially gained recognition as a writer for various menswear publications through his insightful "Groom Guy blog." This platform quickly became an authoritative voice in the industry, offering unparalleled insights into men's grooming and style. Recognizing the potential for further impact, Darius pivoted his brand in 2019. After intensive training and mentorship in New York City with world-class talent such as Vaughn Acord, he secured his first hotel partnership in 2020, establishing a boutique barber studio that elevated the brand to new heights.

Today, Groom Guy stands as a wellness brand that is carving out new niches within the male beauty market and hospitality design. Darius' creative expertise in men's grooming and market strategy has garnered national media attention, with features in *Forbes*, *The New York Times*, *ABC7*, *GQ* and *Modern Salon* and landed him in distinguished places like The White House. His brand collaborations extend to esteemed names such as Esquire, The Macallan, IHG and Pro Golf Association, demonstrating the breadth and influence of his network.

Licensed in Washington D.C., Darius currently operates his business headquartered in the nation's capital, where he continues to set industry standards. He works alongside his childhood friend of twenty years and co-founder, Matthew Sears. He resides in Silver Spring, Maryland, with his wife and their dog Smokey Robinson.

Together, Davie and Sears are more than just leaders in their field; they are visionaries creating a refreshing and bespoke outlook within wellness and hospitality, and they are just getting started!

Judges, cont'd.



Tony Frazier (he/him)
Chief Executive Officer
LeoLabs

Tony Frazier is an operating executive and corporate board member who drives innovation at the intersection of commercial space, data analytics, and national security. He is a trusted mission partner across the national security and space communities who has won billions of dollars in new contract awards with U.S. and international government customers, has incubated and grown two new businesses to more than \$100M, and established strategic partnerships with 3rd party data and

technology companies to fill key product gaps.

Tony currently serves as CEO and Director at LeoLabs, a leader in the commercial markets for Space Domain Awareness and Space Traffic Management solutions that has raised over \$120M in venture capital.

Prior to LeoLabs he was Executive Vice President and General Manager of Public Sector Earth Intelligence for Maxar Technologies (NYSE: MAXR), leading a \$1B P&L providing commercial satellite imagery, online platforms, 3D technology, and geospatial analytic services to the U.S. Government and over 60 U.S. allies and partners. Prior to that, he held other executive leadership roles during his 13 years at Maxar, DigitalGlobe, and GeoEye where he contributed to the company by leading go-to-market, serving as a division president, and shaping product strategy.

Prior to GeoEye, Tony spent his early career in the technology industry driving go-to-market, product management, and strategy in roles at Cisco Systems, Infor, IBM, iPhrase, pcOrder.com, and Bain & Company.

Tony earned a Bachelor of Systems Engineering from the University of Pennsylvania and an M.B.A. with distinction from Harvard University. He currently serves as a member of the corporate Board of Directors of Iridium Communications Inc. (Nasdaq: IRDM) where he is the Audit Committee Chair, and Auria Space. He is currently a board member for the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (2020-present), an education nonprofit that serves over 100,000 students per year, and on the Board of Trustees of the Intelligence and National Security Foundation where he has helped endow the LTG Vince Stewart Intelligence Career Pathways scholarship.



Kacie Lehman (she/her)
VP of Brand Partnerships
Independent Artists Group (IAG)

Kacie Lehman is Vice President, Brand Partnerships at IAG, where she orchestrates global campaigns between culture's leading brands and the agency's diverse set of award-winning talent.

She has executed integrated marketing campaigns with many consumer brands including Coca-Cola, AT&T, Pfizer, Target, Citi, Southwest Airlines, Samsung, and Forever 21 in collaboration with influential talent across TV/Film and Music.

Lehman has received recognitions by *Billboard* 40 Under 40, Variety Power of Women NY Impact List, and Pollstar's NextGen Awards. She has twice served on the jury for CLIO Music Awards.

Previously, Lehman was at Amazon's livestreaming service, Twitch, negotiating high-profile deals that supported creators and built a global community through live content experiences.



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The better the world works.



Building a better
working world

Judges, cont'd.



Bushra Sayed-Ganguly
(she/her)
Partner
EY

Bushra Sayed-Ganguly is a partner in the banking and capital markets tax practice at Ernst & Young. She has 23 years of experience across a broad range of cross-border matters in North America, Asia and Europe, providing leadership, tax planning and transactions advice at large, global financial corporations and public accounting firms. Her focus is on the financial services space, including but not limited to domestic and international banks, fintech, asset management and insurance.

Bushra advises on aspects of federal taxation including acquisitions, mergers, reorganizations, IPO readiness, regulatory advice, international tax planning and financial reporting. Within transactions she focuses on due diligence, integration, tax reporting and planning. Her deal experience includes due diligence projects for domestic and multi-national targets involving stand-alone, carve-out, start-up, distressed and roll-up transactions. She has advised clients on transaction structure and tax modeling.

Prior to Ernst & Young, Bushra worked at KPMG, State Street Corporation, Prudential Financial and Arthur Anderson LLP. She is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) licensed in the states of Delaware, New York and California, a member of the AICPA, and received a B.A. in Accounting from Fairleigh Dickenson University in Madison, New Jersey.

An active member of neighborhood mutual aid organizations in New York City, Bushra's volunteer engagements started 15 years ago and extend across food security, elder care, women's health, anti-poverty, education and workforce development. She lives in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City with her husband, Surya, a nonprofit executive, Borisyltsin the feral cat, and Bijli-Jean, a very social dog originally from Georgia.

Your prosperity is our purpose.

Santander applauds Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship for making a real difference.



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Judges, cont'd.



Tien Tzu (he/him)
Founder & Chief Executive
Officer
Zuora

Tien Tzu is the Founder and CEO of Zuora. Beginning in 2007, Tien evangelized the shift to subscription and service-based business models, coining the phrase “Subscription Economy.” In an effort to empower this new economy, Tien created what became an award-winning monetization suite purpose-built for modern business, capable of powering any recurring revenue model, and to solve the complex billing structures they inherit.

Before Zuora, Tien was one of the “original forces” at Salesforce, joining as employee number 11. In his 9 years at Salesforce (1999-2008), Tien built its original billing system, later serving as Chief Marketing Officer (2003-2005), and Chief Strategy Officer (2005-2008).

Tien is the author of the best selling book, “SUBSCRIBED: Why the Subscription Model Will be Your Company’s Future - and What to Do About It,” published in 2018. Tien has been on the cover of Forbes AI and profiled in stories by Forbes, Fortune and the Wall Street Journal. He received the SIIA 2021 CODiE Lifetime Achievement Award in Business Technology and was named Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst & Young in 2016 and CEO of the Year by The Silicon Valley Business Journal in 2018. He has spoken at the G-20 Summit, Web Summit, Dell World, and SaaStr.

Tien holds a BS in Electrical Engineering from Cornell and an MBA from Stanford’s Graduate School of Business. He is a member of the board of directors of Network For Good.

Judges & Timers

NFTE thanks our quarterfinal and semifinal round judges for volunteering their time, energy and expertise. The support, feedback, and suggestions they provide to our young entrepreneurs are generous gifts. Thanks also to the timekeepers who have volunteered their time to ensure that judges' scores are correctly tabulated throughout the challenge.

Arslan Alamazov, Santander Bank
Kelsey Asevedo, EY
Casey Blake, Microsoft
Jenny Buccos, EXPLR
Minnette Bumpus, NYU
Margarita Capi, Table 22
Alexandra Chaploustskly, BNY
Carol Cho, IRC Wealth
Marsha Corelien, Valley Bank (NFTE Alumna)
Terriq Davidson, Healthy Heart Food Service (NFTE Alumnus)
Priya Desai, MetLife
Kaitlyn Djakov, Valley Bank
Peter Dodson, EY
Kelly Dolson, Retired from EY
Bart Eagle, Scarola Zubatov Schaffzin PLLC
Keith Emmer, Startegix LLC
Amber Flanagan, ASHCON Financial
James Flanagan, Pillar & Co.
Holly Fonseca Fernandes, Pearl Health
Rylie Frieder, PayPal
Erin Gillespie, PayPal
Tasha Graham, Ross Sotres
Sabrina Harryram, Citi
Michiko Hiranuma, Citi
Elaine Ho, Microsoft
Jason Joven, Marketing + Serial Entrepreneur
Zaid Kanaa, PayPal
Ryder Kessler, Abundance New York

Shehzad Khan, Black Crow AI
Evan Kirsh, PayPal and Entrepreneur
Fernanda Kitazawa, PayPal
Iliana Kostadinova, EY
Taylor Leng, EY
Darya Leonova, EY
Shawn Leventhal, Showplace Antique & Design Center
Stuart Leventhal, Lexicon
Claire Lim, IPG
Chui Liu, Cathay Bank
Ying (Selena) Lu, Citi
Nispand Mehta, Microsoft
Maria Mehtani, PayPal
Indira Miller, Valley Bank
Christopher Mobley, City of Orange Township
Deborah Novick, Westchester County
Vanessa Onwe, EY
Esha Pathak, EY
K-Ja Pinge, EY
George Alex Popescu, Coin Mart
Anthony Ramirez II, Mainland Media, LLC
Risha Rathod, EY
Jasmine Rodriguez, Microsoft
Laila Rosenthal, EY
Veronica Roussos, Valley Bank
Jason Saft, Staged to Sell Home
Genevieve Santos-Bann, 360 Beauty Maven Consulting (NFTE Alumna)

Valeri Sewald, MetLife
Sumeet Shah, VHS Ventures
Arzoie Sharma, Citi
Tania Shoma, Valley Bank
Lynsie Slachetka, aJuxt Media Group
Kaylee Smith, Microsoft
Roderick (Shane) Snipes, Ph.D., Citizen Entrepreneur Explorers Program
Judy Stewart, Creative Sense, Inc.
Barrett Stokes, Webster Bank
Gia Suber, EY
Jaron Swartz, Valley Bank
Therese Switzer, SVB / First Citizens Bank

Tom Tang, Cathay Bank
Allen Wang, Microsoft
Kellen Winters, Microsoft
Isabella Xu, Citi

(lists incomplete at time of printing)

PayPal's mission to revolutionize commerce globally centers on empowering communities and customers to thrive in the digital economy.

We are honored to partner with NFTE to activate entrepreneurial mindsets through volunteerism. We are proud of our employees who contribute their time and skills to equip students with the tools and opportunities to succeed.

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SVP and COO/Chief Equity Officer
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Master of Ceremonies



Nadia Campbell-Mitchell
(she/her)
Entrepreneur & Executive
NFTE Class of 2004

Nadia Campbell-Mitchell is an accomplished entrepreneur and nonprofit executive who is dedicated to making a positive impact. Over the last two years, she has held the position of Director of Development and served as an active board member of The Door in New York City and the Association of

Fundraising Professionals (Long Island).

Nadia's entrepreneurial spirit began at the young age of 11 when she founded The Victorian Hands Foundation. Her dedication and hard work have earned her numerous awards, such as the Osborn Elliott Community Service Award, NFTE Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award, and the Volvo for Life Award. Recently, she was awarded the Woman of Distinction Award presented by Assemblywoman Kimberly Jean-Pierre. She has also been recognized by media outlets such as *Essence Magazine*, *Fox Business News*, *NY Daily News*, and the *New York Times* (Sunday Styles). In 2002, Nadia was invited to the White House.

In 2007, Nadia established a Day Spa in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Additionally, she is a certified Reiki Master Teacher, Life Coach, and Meditation Guide. She has been helping individuals through her practice that started in Commack, NY, and grew nationwide since 2016. Nadia was voted the best Reiki Practitioner of Long Island in 2022.

Nadia holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Management and Economics, with an extensive background in nonprofit management and older adult services. She was also a certified New York State Long-Term Care Ombudsman.



Nadia shone as a NFTE Young Entrepreneur of the Year in 2008

Competitors

Solonia Allen (she/her), 16
Almndmlk, Los Angeles, CA



Solonia discovered her love for baking at the age of 7, and it wasn't until 2020 when her mom requested a vegan lemon cake that the idea for her business Almndmlk was born. What started as a family treat became a vibrant business offering all vegan cakes. These cakes are a delicious alternative for those looking to indulge in healthier, plant-based desserts without sacrificing flavor. Committed to promoting a healthier planet, Solonia ensures her cakes are packaged with sustainable materials.

Since launching Almndmlk, she has participated in farmers' markets, built a loyal following on social media, and earned \$1,000 in profits. Looking ahead, Solonia plans to attend the Culinary Institute of America to refine her skills and open multiple Almndmlk locations nationwide by age 20.

"Make a business out of something you are passionate about. If you don't love it, then your customers might not love it either."

Tywon Barber (he/him), 17
Ty's Tech Repair, Beloit, WI



In Tywon's sophomore year of high school, he ran out of learning opportunities in information technology, and had to attend college courses for further education. He attempted to become an intern but couldn't find the right opportunity. He created Ty's Tech Repair to provide a solution for young people like him. Ty's Tech Repair employs teens interested in IT to learn tech repair in a live repair shop environment, where they learn applicable skills on the job. They work with a trained professional and are offered certifications to improve their education. Ty's Tech

Repair fuels the passion for tech and IT careers in young people, revitalizing the field. COMPTIA ITF+ certified, Tywon plans to study computer science and IT in college and learn web development, programming, and hardware.

"If you follow your passion, the rest is easy."

William Barone (he/him), 14, and Chase Montminy (he/him), 14
Safety Sense, Hillsborough County, FL



When William was diagnosed with a condition that made travel difficult, he began noticing how challenging travel can be for the differently abled, especially those hard-of-hearing. William and Chase created SafetySense, combining motion sensors and AI to protect those with hearing difficulties to help them travel freely and safely, alerting them to objects they don't see or recognize in their path. Safety Sense combines proven safety technology with the technology of a hearing aid to help make communities safer. William hopes to continue

his entrepreneurial journey at the Wharton Business School in Pennsylvania. Chase plans to attend college and follow whichever path life takes him!

"As long as you have a vision and a dream for what you're passionate about, you can succeed."

Peyton Bernstein (he/him), 17
Peyton's Pastries, Dallas, TX



Can people enjoy an affordable home-baked cupcake and help their community at the same time? After a Stage 3 Neuroblastoma diagnosis, Peyton and his brother began raising money for St. Baldrick's, a childhood cancer research charity, by selling Peyton's baked goods. In 2018, he won a \$500 grant to continue baking for charity. So far, Peyton has raised \$10,000 for St. Baldrick's. In 2021, Peyton came out as transgender, and discovered the Trevor Project. Wanting to help combat the rise of homophobia and queer youth suicide, he created Peyton's Pastries, making high-quality home-

baked goods from scratch while advocating for others, specifically queer youth. With support from his mom and friends, Peyton can help others while doing what he loves, being in the kitchen. Peyton hopes to study Entrepreneurship at Louisiana State University and expand Peyton's Pastries all throughout the South.

"Try it. Start small, and if you don't like it then you can always change."

Noah Blackston (he/him), 18
Table Top Pizza, Oxon Hill, MD



Everyone has an opinion about the perfect pizza and how it's so hard to find. For Noah, the crust was always too thick or there was never enough cheese. Having gone through a culinary arts program at his high school, Noah wanted to solve these problems for everyone. Table Top Pizza, a restaurant where customers can create and decorate their own customizable pizzas exactly to their preferences, is inclusive for all, catering to various dietary needs, and has a big focus on hospitality, making every customer feel like family. Noah was the 1st place winner of the

Prince Georges County Young Entrepreneurship Contest in June 2023. He now attends Alabama A&M, where he plans to major in hospitality management to gain knowledge of the restaurant industry and build connections.

"No idea is a bad idea. People will buy anything; It's all about how you present it."

Nathaniel Casas (he/him), 16
Night Catch, Dallas, TX



Fish are more active at night but not much of the fishing community night fishes because it's not safe due to low visibility. Nate started fishing from a young age and started wondering how he could help make night fishing safer. He created Night Catch, an artificial, reusable lure that is able to glow in the dark without any technology. The Night Catch lure can be easily tracked, guaranteeing a safer, more enjoyable experience when fishing at night. Nate

is Ocean certified and ESP certified and plans in the future to either attend college for architecture or go to trade school to become a diesel mechanic.

"Come up with an idea or product that relates to you and surround yourself with business-minded people; don't let anybody tell you you can't do something."

Rebecca Chaviano (she/her), 13
Down to Bake Delights, Cutler Bay, FL



Rebecca's cousin has Down syndrome, and she has seen firsthand the struggle he faces when searching for employment as an 18 year-old with an intellectual disability. Rebecca utilized her love and passion for baking, and created Down to Bake Delights to bring awareness, employment opportunities, and valuable job training to teens with intellectual disabilities. Down to Bake Delights is a community-focused bakery that offers delicious handcrafted treats while empowering individuals with Down syndrome through meaningful employment and skill development.

Their mission is to create a welcoming environment where everyone can contribute, learn, and enjoy the art of baking. Qualified volunteers provide essential job training for successful workforce integration, enhancing communication skills and more. In 7th grade, Rebecca received an award for Next Generation Leader. In high school, she plans to enroll in dual enrollment and AICE classes, while continuing to grow her business.

"It may seem hard at first but over time it progressively gets easier."

Tereisha Chestnut (she/her), 16
VoiceOff Café, Jacksonville, FL



Tereisha always wanted to create a café, but she recognized how excluded the deaf and hard-of-hearing community is when it comes to café design. She created VoiceOff Café, a café for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. The café provides employment and events, including deaf parades, silent movie nights, and signed performances. They have a fluent ASL speaker on staff at all times and use accommodating technology, including beepers, adjusting lights, menus with visuals for how to sign food items, a video ordering service, and more. VoiceOff Café ensures that the community feels comfortable and included.

Tereisha recently graduated from the leadership academy at Georgia Military Prep and became the commander of the unarmed basic drill team. She is now the administrative officer in her ROTC program. She plans to join the Air Force after high school, then attend FAMU to study business and computer science.

"Push past the fear of failing."

Jordin Cole (she/her), 16, and Jocelyn Saucedo Valencia (she/her), 17
BusLink, Orlando, FL



Jocelyn often watched her classmates sprint down the halls after school to ensure they didn't miss their buses, and she missed the bus once herself. Public school transportation was causing daily problems, and she and Jordin decided to do something about it. BusLink is an app that notifies its users about their approaching school bus arrival, ensuring an efficient commute to and from school. The app aims to improve the student experience and lift a burden off of students

and their families. By providing real-time updates and safety features, BusLink ensures timely pickups and drop-offs, reducing the stress and uncertainty associated with school transportation. Both Jordin and Jocelyn plan to study business in college. Jordin plans to attend Drexel University.

"Start with a clear, original idea. You will need to make changes, but that's okay. It'll help refine your idea into something exceptional."

Rosalie Delgado (she/her), 17
IndependMe, Perth Amboy, NJ



Single parents are overburdened with responsibilities often handled by two parents, taking away from time they could interact with their kids. Rosalie's mother raised her and her brother in a single-parent household, so she knows the hardships faced by these families. Additionally, neglectful parenting can lead to a lack of independence in children today. Rosalie created the IndependMe app to help kids of single parents gain their independence on their own via interactive games and hold themselves accountable through a schedule. IndependMe offers

a parent-driven experience where parents assign tasks from which kids earn stars after completion. Rosalie plans to attend college and hopefully launch her app. In college, she plans to study business, and possibly marketing.

"The path of entrepreneurship has opened up so many doors I never imagined even existed. If I had a chance to do it all over again, I wouldn't even think twice."

Victor Manuel Duque (he/him), 18
GoLyte, Central Falls, RI



75% of Americans are chronically dehydrated. Victor learned this through his personal fitness research after reading about electrolytes. How could so many people be dehydrated when electrolytes are supposedly readily available? Victor determined that lack of access must be a root cause and created GoLyte, on-the-go electrolytes, to revolutionize hydration and make electrolytes even more accessible. Unlike beverages or powders for individual consumers, GoLyte is an electrolyte (powder) dispenser machine for companies

to encourage their employees or members to live healthier lifestyles. GoLyte intergrates directly into existing infrastructure to lower costs and eliminate leasing fees. GoLyte can make a huge difference to the community, helping everyone stay properly hydrated and healthy. Victor hopes to attend college at Babson College and study entrepreneurship.

"Be comfortable being uncomfortable because there will be times it's going to be hard and you have to get used to that in order to grow and be better than before."

Xander Faria (he/him), 17
Radiant Rise Clocks, New Bedford, MA

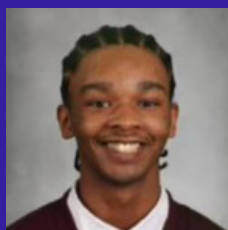


During the Fall, Xander could feel fatigue building as the sun rose later each day as he woke up for school. Xander knew others struggled, too, and understood the power of natural sunlight. He came up with the idea for Radiant Rise Clocks, alarm clocks that use a mixture of sound and lighting technology to mimic natural sunlight and assist early risers who experience fatigue with avoiding sleep deprivation, S.A.D. (seasonal affective disorder), or general sleepiness. Natural sunlight can also provide other significant benefits, including improved focus, increased happiness, and better ability

to do work. Radiant Rise Clocks provides all this to those who need to wake up for work or other obligations. Xander hopes to study computer science at MIT or Carnegie Mellon to expand his coding ability, and maybe help launch his business.

"Don't discount any ideas you might have, in case they end up working."

Jaylen Fultz (he/him), 17
BOYFAILYOURS, Columbus, OH



How often do you get to buy artwork that truly reflects you? BOYFAILYOURS is a collaborative art business, focusing on exploring and representing a client's individuality. Jaylen works with his clients throughout the creative process to truly reflect them through his "abstract expressionism" art style. Since the age of 14, Jaylen has had murals and paintings displayed all across his city and has worked with and learned from many professionals. He has seen the "starving artist" trope be overcome time and time again by the artists he looks up to, and *"Please do something that you really have a passion for ... Just love and believe in your goal and purpose."*

he wants that cycle of inspiration to continue. He intends to keep performing and selling paintings and other art and joining youth boards for art non-profits around his city to gain enough resources and experience to hold programs and create projects for young artists further down the road.

Sophia Garcia (she/her), 14
Bouclé, Miami, FL



When Sophia wanted to wear her natural hair, she didn't know where to start, which made the process a lot more difficult than it needed to be. Sophia wants to make people's life easier when it comes to textured hair and not waste time with routines or products that aren't for them. Bouclé is an app for people with textured hair. The app will scan your hair and generate hairstyles, hair care routines, and products according to your hair type, budget and time. Bouclé also helps create a community

that promotes embracing your natural beauty and who you are. Sophia plans to go to college and study psychology.

"Create something that you are passionate about; you don't know who else might also be struggling."

Evelyn Guerrero (she/her), 12
Evelyn's Sparkle Bins, Miami, FL



One day, Evelyn's dad noticed a terrible smell coming from their garbage bin. Evelyn saw an opportunity to solve a common problem with some great products and her own work ethic. Evelyn's Sparkle Bins is a service that helps people save time and keep their bins pest and odor-free, using eco-friendly cleaning products to clean garbage and recycling bins to reduce rats, cockroaches, bacteria and bad odors. Evelyn's Sparkle Bins leaves bins smelling fresh and clean without harsh chemicals that are harmful to the environment! Evelyn

won first place at the Grant Cardone Foundation 10X Kids pitch off and was president of her class last year. She plans to expand her business and add more revenue streams while taking dual enrollment classes and eventually begin investing in real estate with her parents.

"Becoming an entrepreneur is difficult at first but if you keep going it will get easier and you will have an amazing learning experience."

David Gutierrez (he/him), 14
Anyone Can Game (ACG), Los Angeles, CA



David loves playing video games, but not everyone can. People who struggle with physical challenges like hearing impairment can't experience video games with as much joy as he does and often struggle with noise sensitivity or sensory issues. David created Anyone Can Game (ACG), a jacket outfitted with first-in-class technology to assist gamers with hearing impairment, using a proprietary raspberry pi mini computer and a built-in haptic system. These pieces of technology allow actions like vibrations, synchronized LED lights, and augmented audio. David's

experience with structuring video game code and design truly qualifies him for this work, and he's excited to be building a platform for the future of accessible gaming. *"With a little creativity anything is possible."*

Keith Harris (he/him), 17
Tactful Tutors, Washington, DC



While in the 11th grade, Keith struggled with pre-calculus, and tutoring is what truly helped him the most. With many students suffering from limited teacher attention and lack of support in school, tutoring is becoming more essential, but it is often difficult to find the right tutor. Keith has created Tactful Tutors, personalized tutoring that utilizes a proprietary personality test to ensure the tutoring is an excellent match for each client. Keith plans to study psychology in the future, as well as developmental hindrances, so he can continue

perfecting lesson plans and make Tactful Tutors even more inclusive.

"Never stop trying. Most people quit just before reaching success."

Ayaan Hassan (he/him), 15
AidlyAI, San Jose, CA



While traveling with his family, Ayaan suffered a bad allergic reaction, and finding information on nearby urgent care facilities took hours. When they finally arrived, they were surprised with an out-of-pocket medical bill! Ayaan realized that a simple online search for urgent care facilities does not reveal enough information to allow users to make an informed decision. So he created AidlyAI, an app that connects patients to urgent cares near them, filtering the results by the patient's health insurance. AI allows for smoother conversation with the patient,

leaving less room for error/misjudgment. AidlyAI also has a free version to help underprivileged folks find the quality healthcare they need. Ayaan is Intuit Design for Delight certified, and even helped out at a NFTE BizCamp for rising 9th graders to get them interested in entrepreneurship.

"Get as much feedback as possible because the input that you get is really the secret sauce in perfecting all the kinks in your idea."

Brihana Herrera Martinez (she/her), 16, and Danamari Martinez Reyes (she/her), 17
Bra Physics, Dallas, TX



Since most bra manufacturers measure people incorrectly and have a limited size range, most people buy and wear bras that don't fit them well. In fact, 85% of women wear the wrong size, with 53% feeling uncomfortable. It doesn't help that 78% are embarrassed to talk about it! Danamari and Brihana set out to create a business to measure each woman's body to customize their ideal bra. No one had taught them how to find the ideal size, and they want to be the solution for others, and be able to restore dignity to women's self-esteem in the process. Currently, Danamari plans to attend college, have a career and build a family. Brihana plans to study to become a doctor.

"Never give up on your dreams; no matter who says that you can't do it, you always can."

"Never be afraid to try something new."

Lucio Hightower-Rojas (he/him), 16
Scholar Brilliance, Los Angeles, CA



Lucio has already earned \$3,000 in college scholarships by navigating the challenging process of private applications. This firsthand experience inspired him to launch Scholar Brilliance, an AI-driven gamified platform that helps students like him improve their essays, manage tasks, and track successes in the scholarship application process. As the owner of Dartoom AI, Paradise Mulch and as a NFTE alumnus, Lucio embodies the "Voyager" archetype from his Entrepreneurial Mindset Index (EMI) test. He sees beyond the current state to solve pain points and set long-term goals for success.

Developing this business plan showed him that frustration is just the start of innovation. Scholar Brilliance isn't just a tool; it's about giving students a fighting chance at a debt-free future. His future vision for the company includes forging partnerships with school districts to offer the platform to high school seniors nationwide.

"Go for it. It is very rewarding."

Dorothy Ho (she/her), 17, and Kimberlee Tran (she/her), 17
Nutri-Shell, San Francisco, CA



As a home gardener, Dorothy had uncomfortable experiences with fertilizers, and wanted a sustainable solution that also made the consumer experience more convenient, enjoyable and healthy. Kimberlee cares a lot about her environmental footprint and was moved by the idea. They created Nutri-Shell, a fertilizer business that uses eggshells, lemon zest and dried rose petals to create a pleasant smelling, organic, nutrient-dense supplement for plants that is packaged and delivered sustainably, allowing for a cleaner, healthier environment.

In the future, Kimberlee hopes to attend UC Berkeley and study Psychology and have a side career selling her artwork. Dorothy plans to double major in Elementary Education and Psychology at a UC campus. Both plan to find enjoyable careers that will help them support their families.

"Ask and listen for feedback and constructive criticism. Don't be discouraged by failure, because the best ideas come from bad ones!"

Nehissa Jean-Louis (she/her), 15
BankoleG, North Miami, FL



As Nehissa entered adolescence, she felt she lacked the space and support needed for personal growth, and wanted to help other teens avoid feeling the same way. Seeing peers struggle with choosing a career path at the end of middle school, along with the rising number of youth in shelters, she created BankoleG, a nonprofit that helps youth in underserved communities by providing physical aid and support for their personal, academic, and career growth, with specialized vocational guidance, and a unique combination of hands-on mentoring and a customized app for personalized and effective training. Nehissa would like to attend Columbia University to double major in Forensic Psychology and Political Science and minor in International Relations. She then wants to attend Harvard University and become an international criminal defense attorney.

"Be passionate about what you do—this passion not only makes your work more enjoyable but also helps others see the value and excitement in your endeavors."

Jessica Kahn (she/her), 17
DocBox, Pembroke Pines, FL



Jessica recently visited a small town in Alaska without healthcare professionals or accessible healthcare. She knew there had to be a solution to this problem and created DocBox, providing healthcare to underserved areas using innovative telehealth technologies. Through DocBox, patients can meet with a doctor virtually but have access to equipment for non-emergency medical services inside a booth. Additionally, 10 percent of profits will go to communities that don't have the funds to purchase a DocBox for their community. A passionate artist with a flair for creativity, a keen eye for detail and a love for artistic expression, Jessica plans to attend college at Florida State University or University of Central Florida to study criminology for a career in forensic psychology.

"Just do it!! If you have a business idea, go ahead with it because you can never succeed if you don't try."

Anthony Kosofsky (he/him), 16
Green Haven Subscriptions, Linden, MI



Growing up with plant enthusiasts taught Anthony how plants enrich our lives. He wanted to bring the joy of plants to everyone, while providing education and guidance. Green Haven Subscriptions sells curated houseplants for any consumer, no matter their experience, shipping anywhere in America, urban or rural. What sets them apart is their commitment to community-building through plant education, including plant doctor consultations, progress check-ups, and plant swap meets. They recognize varying levels of expertise, offering monthly subscriptions with adjustable difficulty levels. Anthony has attended college since he was 15 and is his second year of dual at Mott Community College. He also takes business courses at Genesee Career Institute. His ultimate goal is to earn a bachelor's degree in Business and minor in Botany at the University of Michigan.

"If you're hardworking and stay away from bad influences and are your own person, then you've already got what it takes."

Simonne Kumar (she/her), 14
ColorSense, Weston, FL



As a woman of color, Simonne got tired of buying foundations that didn't match her skin. Many people, especially people of color, struggle to find the right makeup shade, spend excessive time and money on experimentation, and lack personalized beauty guidance. ColorSense is a smart beauty device designed to help find and craft the perfect makeup shades by analyzing skin tone, instantly producing custom lipstick, eyeshadow, and foundation shades, and even offering personalized hair and fashion advice. Simonne has a background in advanced art and color theory and plans to

attend college and pursue a degree in STEM at a prestigious university in the U.S., learn business and economics, and continue to scale ColorSense. She is passionate about making every person feel seen, included, and confident in their own skin.

"Improve from your failures and keep pushing forward. Surround yourself with supportive people who encourage and challenge you to grow."

Leilani Liang-Fuentes (she/her), 18
INDEPENKITS, San Francisco, CA



Leilani met her best friend just last year, and after only a few weeks of knowing her, she knew everything about her from her favorite color to the hardships she experienced growing up with autism. Learning how her friend's mom had struggled to teach her to be self-sufficient and the effects it has left on her in the long-term, Leilani created INDEPENKITS to provide resources for children with autism and their parents to make their learning experience easier. INDEPENKITS is a subscription service that sends boxes monthly, with fun, hands-on challenges designed to help children with autism

learn independence. INDEPENKITS builds problem solving skills, social skills, and fine motor skills from adolescence to early adulthood. In addition to starting her business, Leilani plans to study Law, and is currently attending college at City College of San Francisco.

"Start a business you truly have passion for and continue regardless of the outcome."

Elizabeth Manuchian (she/her), 17
Aqua Cuffs, Queens, NY



In 2023, there were 80 shark attacks worldwide, and half of those were in the United States. Thirteen people were killed. As someone suffering from a phobia of sharks, Elizabeth never swam in the ocean and always wished there was a product that could allow her to be worry-free in the sea. When she learned that sharks could be deterred by electromagnetic fields, she created Aqua Cuffs, a shark repellent band for your wrist or ankle that safely deters sharks when swimming in the ocean, using a multi-frequency electromagnetic field. The band attacks the shark's electroreceptors, which repels them in the other direction. Aqua-Cuff is making the ocean a no-shark-bite-zone by providing effective and environmentally friendly shark repellent solutions, ensuring that every dive, surf, and swim is an experience free from fear. Elizabeth plans on attending

college with a business-related major.

"Go for it, even when no one thinks your idea is good."

Lodias Martinet (he/him), 13
Style Selector, Midlothian, TX



Over 61% of Americans ages 14-24 don't know what to wear on a daily basis. Lodias Martinet realized an opportunity and co-created Style Selector, an outfit generator within an app that uses uploaded photos of items in your own wardrobe to suggest daily styles. Unlike competing apps, Style Selector does not use AI, which commonly mistakes the background of each photo as part of the garment. Style Selector also has a philanthropic goal, to support Soles4Souls, an organization that donates clothes and shoes to those who cannot afford them. Lodias

has won multiple awards and plans to finish high school early and receive his associate's at Navarro College. He then plans to attend either the University of Pennsylvania or Notre Dame for medical school and become a neurosurgeon.

"Find something you love and make it into a business! I love coding so I made my app, and now I'm competing in New York!"

Jaylin Metcalfe (he/him), 18
Black Woman Support, South Holland, IL



There is not enough real-time information being broadcasted on the threat of trafficking. Jaylin was horrified to hear from women he values and respects that they were dealing with such brutal and unspeakable crimes. He created B.W.S. to fight against feelings of powerlessness in the face of this worldwide, critical threat. B.W.S. is an application designed to empower and inform Black women about the dangers of trafficking, offering tailored safety protocols and comprehensive resources. The app uses community involvement along with the collaboration of government

officials and law enforcement to combat trafficking and create a safer and less crime-filled environment. Jaylin is no stranger to entrepreneurship, and hopes to attend WGU to study Data Analytics and start a business using the skills he continues to learn.

"No failure is a loss; It's just a lesson to be learned to improve and upgrade every chance you get."

JoahLuis Molina (he/him), 18
That Junk Removal Company, Providence, RI



JoahLuis lives in the heart of South Providence, undeniably the most polluted neighborhood in Rhode Island. Illegal garbage companies use neighborhoods like his as dumping grounds, creating unsafe environments for everyone, including wildlife. He wanted to make a difference in his community and created That Junk Removal Company, which plans to be the greenest junk hauler and the biggest contributor to community cleanups and safety in the world. The first Sunday of every month JoahLuis and a team of volunteers go out into the community to

pick up garbage in their neighborhood, making the community a safe, secure and beautiful place. JoahLuis plans to attend the Community College of Rhode Island and study hard by night and work hard by day to make his bold mission possible.

"DO IT. Keep procrastinating and it's only going to draw the finish line further away: 'a dream is worth nothing if you leave it on a pillow'."

Jack Olson (he/him), 15
SunSkin, Fort Lauderdale, FL



The beginning of his freshman year, Jack started to experience more severe acne than he had before, which diminished his overall confidence and mood. No product seemed to solve all of these problems. Realizing this wasn't a unique experience and that many teens feel this type of acne-shame, Jack created SunSkin, fully opaque skin-colored pimple patches that use brightening benefits to help heal and conceal blemishes on your skin. SunSkin patches come in a wide variety of shades and won't only revolutionize the pimple patch market and cosmetic industry as a whole, but also will help to empower teens and boost confidence. Jack is excited about entrepreneurship and hopes to continue his education in both marketing and business and build his network to support the creation of SunSkin.

"Maximize your knowledge, not only in entrepreneurship, but also your own interests – your entry into the business industry could be a connection of both."

Roman Ortiz (he/him), 18
FAZE, Tuscon, AZ



Roman used to struggle with his personal appearance and was self-conscious about how he looked. Getting into fashion helped him overcome his self-consciousness, but it took a lot of trial and error to get him where he is today. "What if I could help other people overcome their self-consciousness in less time than it took me?" FAZE is an app that will help people become more stylish instantly, using AI to assess the user's personal style and compare it to other styles and trends in the real world to help create fashionable outfits. FAZE will cut the amount of time people spend worrying about their outfit choices significantly. Roman plans to graduate from the University of Arizona in 2028 with a degree in Aerospace Engineering, continuing to work on FAZE on the side while working toward becoming an engineer.

"No idea is a bad idea!"

Raahi Pachbhai (she/her), 15
Lights On, St. Louis, MO



When she was younger, Raahi watched a Bollywood movie about a girl who navigated through the world after a disfiguring accident. She wanted to create something for people struggling to fit in after experiencing similar tragedy, or people who were born differently abled. She created Lights On, which uses futuristic AI technology and 3-D printing to create customized prosthetics and adaptive clothing that cater to all types of people's needs, specifically people with disabilities. Since Lights On uses newer and more innovative technology, the cost for their products is lower than other companies costs. Lights On uses an ultra-modern scanner, making sure that everything is the perfect fit. A nationally ranked gymnast and dancer and recipient of a President's Volunteer Service Award, Raahi plans to go to the University of Missouri Kansas City for their 6-year medical program.

"The worst that can happen is that you have to close your business down. But if you keep persevering through tough times, your business can become huge."

Atman Patel (he/him), 13
WhatMyStory, Baltimore, MD



Ever wished you could star in your very own favorite adventure? Atman remembers how his mother would create bedtime stories based on his own daily experiences, including friends and even soccer heroes. Realizing that many kids might not have that personalized storytelling experience, Atman combined his love for coding and storytelling and developed WhatMyStory by Story Crafters, a machine learning model that generates personalized stories to reignite the love for reading among children. By making reading fun and engaging, WhatMyStory can positively impact education and development, strengthen family bonds, and build a more connected and literate community. Atman hopes to use WhatMyStory to improve literacy across the U.S. He hopes to study computer science and business at a college like MIT, and continue playing soccer. For more information; visit whatmystory.com.

"Start with your passion! Find something you love and believe in, and let that drive your ideas. Don't be afraid to experiment and learn from your mistakes—every setback is just a stepping stone to success."

Karla Perez Osornio (she/her), 18
RFTS, Perth Amboy, NJ



Karla's parents migrated to the United States in order to give her and her siblings a better life, yet were faced with limited resources, causing them to struggle and work much harder based on their immigration status alone. Their story is just one of the many that inspired her to create RFTS (Reaching for the Stars), which provides the right resources for immigrant families starting a life in America, including employment, English language courses, and legal help. RFTS makes it simple and affordable for those in need of resources, using a survey to best match available resources with their clients' needs. A member of the Hispanic community, Karla truly understands the impact RFTS will have. She is currently pursuing immigration law at Villanova University.

"Learn from lessons. Rather than viewing everything as 'failure versus success,' it's helpful to think of the entire experience of building a business as a journey."

Mars Ratliff (they/them), 16
Interio, Dallas, TX



Mars wanted to make a career of interior design after just one class but realized it would have to be a side hustle because it's an expensive industry. Mars created Interio, an app to bridge the gap between designer and client, giving interior designers of all experience levels a direct line to their client pool. Designers get easier access than ever before to their customer base, and the client version saves potential clients' time, ensuring they hire a trustworthy designer. Interio opens up possibilities for young, queer, BIPOC, low-income, and disabled people so the interior design world can welcome fresh perspectives and new ideas. Mars would also like to attend college, possibly to study writing but hasn't decided where. They want a successful career in something that they love, and plan to be a strong, independent person.

"Follow your passion... Make sure you invest in something you truly care about and want to see flourish."

Aiyanna Rodriguez (she/her), 17
Dancing Broke, Springfield, MA



Since she started dancing at the age of two, Aiyanna has been in and out of dance studios where she's felt judged and everything has been expensive. Having chronic asthma and coming from a low-income household, she always felt stigmatized by other dancers and she wanted to change that for herself and others. She created Dancing Broke, an affordable dance studio for ages four and up, where all are welcome, regardless of ability, disability, or income. Aiyanna plans to continue dancing in college while she studies healthcare and to continue to show up in her dance community.

"Always work hard for what you want and never give up."

Angel Rodriguez (he/him), 17
Esthetic, Bronx, NY



Have you ever spent so much time trying to find the perfect stylist, but when you do, it goes horribly wrong? Angel has had this experience and has created a solution so that no one else has to face the same problem. Esthetic is an app that makes it easy for anyone to get the exact hairstyle they want by matching them with their dream hairstylist. You spend minimal time/effort to find the right stylist, and the AI within the app considers all factors of what the client desires, finding them the perfect stylist. Angel plans to attend college in Stanford, majoring in Artificial Intelligence unless he lands a good position before going to college.

"Be ready to push past your limits. The responsibility given to you is much more difficult than anything else."

Sayana Scott (she/her), 16
Naturals, Ferguson, MO



Toxic chemicals found in certain cosmetics can seriously harm the skin, causing skin rash and chemical burn, to devastating chronic illness. They are often sold in plastic containers that, when not recycled, also harm the earth. Sayana created Naturals, an online and in-person marketplace, to solve both problems through eco-friendly, biodegradable, and natural products, including "Naturals Specialty Kits." Naturals features partnerships with farmers' markets, in-store licensed dietitians and cosmetologists, and in-store recycling and compost bins – all at affordable prices! Naturals also donates 10% of profits to the Environmental Defense Fund and teaches youth in weekly workshops about sustainability. A VP of her school's Diversity Club and co-founder of a Black Student Union, Sayana plans to attend an HBCU (Historically Black College or University) to study Dentistry, and later enroll in Dental School.

"Work your hardest and always try your best, especially when things start to get frustrating and don't work out according to plan. Never give up!"

Nishant Shah (he/him), 15, and Bryce Wagner (he/him), 15 (also pictured: Gabriel Lopez, 15)
Eco-Vision, Tampa, FL



Covid nearly killed a member of Nishant's family, leaving them hospitalized and bed-ridden for weeks. It attacked their digestive system and caused positive neurotransmitters in the brain to drop, causing depression. They asked Nishant if his VR headset could transport them into nature from their bed, so he began researching the therapeutic benefits of nature coupled with VR programming. Eco-Vision uses VR and AI technology to immerse chronically ill patients in nature — a safe, non-invasive therapy that increases neurotransmitters in the brain, decreasing depression and speeding recovery. Eco-Vision has been working with the Long Covid Clinic at the Mayo Clinic, preparing for a six week trial involving 10 patients. They have also built a relationship with the largest VR gaming company in the world. Nishant and his two business partners plan to continue their work on Eco-Vision and to seek out projects like this in the future.

"Don't be afraid to push boundaries and think outside the box."

Morgan Shepperd (she/her), 18
MathYourWay, Stone Mountain, GA



With 1.5 million K-12 students in the state of Georgia, about 900,000 lack proficiency in mathematics. Current teaching structures do not prioritize a solid mathematical foundation and comprehension. Having attended over 10 schools, Morgan noticed that most students do not like math. She began tutoring to increase students' confidence and enjoyment, and MathYourWay was born. MathYourWay provides personalized, online, and traveling math tutoring services to K-12 students who need remediation or additional assistance, and have a desire to advance their knowledge. MathYourWay lessons reference the Georgia Standards of Excellence for math, employs tutors familiar with current curriculum (current high school students), and provides transportation along with affordable, flexible payment plans. Morgan plans to obtain a B.S. in Mathematics from Augusta University with a certification in Secondary Education, and to teach students in middle and high school to bridge the educational gaps in comprehension.

"Turn your passion into a profit without losing sight of the reason in which you built it."

Arianna Tilley (she/her), 17
Hair-So-Slikk, Ormond Beach, FL



As an African-American woman, Arianna understands the hassles of trying to comb and brush down hair and avoid damage-causing products that stunt hair growth. She created her own product that will help her hair grow, make it healthy, and prevent further damage. Hair-So-Slikk products come in different colors that blend in with hair color, so no dye is needed. Arianna loves doing hair and wants to help other Black and brown women feel confident in their natural hair, as well as in false hair. She plans on going into the United States Air Force, then going to college to study Animal Sciences. Someday she'd like to buy land in South Dakota to start her own refuge for large cats.

"Have a plan before you jump in and start a business. It's easier to do things when they're planned instead of off-the-cuff."

Angela Tran (she/her), 15
Astro Ball, Tampa, FL



Angela and her siblings were repeatedly told they were disturbing their family and neighbors when practicing basketball. When they couldn't practice indoors or outdoors, they started giving up on the sport they enjoyed. Angela wanted to put an end to this discouragement and created Astro Ball, which uses rubber and acoustic foam in order to create a silent basketball for people who enjoy basketball and want a way to practice silently anywhere, under any condition, and anytime, without disturbing others. Angela hopes to attend college at

USF and follow in her older brother's footsteps by studying Business, Computer Science, or Medicine, while continuing to explore entrepreneurship. She loves playing and listening to music and used to be lead guitarist in a band.

"Entrepreneurship is all about how you want to uniquely solve problems for you or your community. Nothing matters if you don't truly enjoy what you pursue."

Ariana Whitaker (she/her), 16
DigiPlan, South Holland, IL



Although she is a straight-A honors student, many of Ariana's teachers don't understand her struggles behind the scenes; procrastination has taken a toll on both her mental and physical health. She created an app, DigiPlan, to help alleviate procrastination and time-blindness among students by eliminating distractions and integrating AI to help accurately assess a student's progress. Ariana's goal is to positively impact the education industry by maximizing students' academic abilities. She is currently ranked #1 in her junior class and was the 2024 Midwest Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge Champion. She plans to attend college at Columbia University in New York City majoring in Actuarial and Political Science.

"You may be nervous expressing your ideas, but act on your passion with confidence. Anything is possible."

Carter Tran (he/him), 17
Palette Pro, Palm Beach Gardens, FL



Every artist faces the same set of problems, including expensive supplies, finding the right brand, or lacking creativity/skill. As an artist himself, Carter has faced these problems and knows how discouraging they are. He created Palette Pro to find a way around these and other obstacles. Palette Pro curates monthly kits that provide artists with anything that may aid their art process, such as supplies, prompts, and tutorials, giving artists everything they need with convenience while also being fun. Palette Pro's competitive advantage includes the prompts and tutorials that help artists enhance their techniques and give them ideas to elevate their art with more than quality materials. Carter has been involved with art for 10 years and plans to attend FSU for criminology while continuing to focus on his business.

"Be confident in yourself; Have a good balance between personality and professionalism; Set challenging but possible goals; There will always be setbacks so keep powering through."

Johns Williams (he/him), 13
Earbud Buddy, Baltimore, MD



Earwax can build up very easily in earbuds if they are used regularly, which can lead to breakage, ear infections, and even temporary hearing loss. Johns experienced this firsthand, but after trying multiple products, none seemed to work. He decided to take action, and created Earbud Buddy, an earbud cleaner that is easy-to-use, portable, effective, and will not damage earbuds. He plans for portions of Earbud Buddy's profits to be given back to the community. Johns is an honors student in accelerated math, an editor for his school's magazine, and a member of the debate club, where he has won first place on numerous occasions. He would eventually like to go to college, learn more about business, and potentially use those skills to enhance Earbud Buddy.

"Becoming an entrepreneur is scary. Be open to change. Also, be open to criticism so that people can help you make your business better."

Cristian Velasquez (he/him), 18
Street Burger, Miami Gardens, FL



In 2023 alone, over 30,000 people in Florida were reported to be homeless. They comprise one of the most stigmatized communities, yet much legislation and funding appears implemented to ensure they remain homeless. This contradiction led Cristian to create Street Burger, a "burger bar & bed" nonprofit that employs, feeds and houses homeless individuals, selling affordable burgers and meals made from quality ingredients to consumers. Street Burger wishes to directly impact the community

around it as well as promote proper legislation that benefits the homeless. Cristian plans to study Accounting at Miami Dade College and then transfer to Florida International University to gain his CPA. He hopes to either open his own firm or get a job that also allows him to travel.

"Be willing to build a proper plan to ensure your dream is thought-out and achievable. That way, you significantly increase your chances of success and narrow down what you really want out of your business."

**Our aspiring entrepreneurs' travel is supported in part
by the Ralph Lauren Corporate Foundation**

Volunteers of the Year

Integral to the success of NFTE classroom programming are the generous time and talent offered by our volunteers. Volunteer speakers share their entrepreneurial journeys and insights in the classroom; coaches work one-on-one to support students' work on business plans; field trip hosts demonstrate real-life businesses in action; and judges provide important feedback at competitions.

Each of the volunteers selected by the NFTE regions displays an ongoing dedication to NFTE's mission to make a difference in the lives of our students.

The national Individual Volunteerism Award recognizes one volunteer who has developed innovative ways to support NFTE and its students. The award recipient serves as a powerful example of how business leaders can impact the lives and futures of young people learning to engage their entrepreneurial mindsets.

2024 Individual Volunteer of the Year

Andy Beepath (NFTE 1995)
New England Region
AVP, Business Banking Officer, Brookline Bank

Andy Beepath started his volunteer journey with NFTE New England while at Santander Bank, back in 2018. As his first engagement with us, he judged the 2018 regional challenge, and since then, Andy has come back to support students in a variety of capacities, from judging other competitions to one-on-one coaching in classrooms.

Andy's authentic passion for our work stems from his own experience as a NFTE alumnus, and now as a banking executive, Andy has the opportunity to give back. When he changed companies and moved to Brookline Bank a few years ago, he brought his love of NFTE and volunteering with him, inspiring his new colleagues to follow in his footsteps and join him in the classroom. Most recently, Andy and his colleagues decided to dedicate themselves to supporting a specific classroom, working with the students from Keefe Regional Technical High School on a near monthly basis, building deeper relationships with the students and forming long-term mentoring partnerships.



Individual Volunteer of the Year Regional Finalists, 2024

Capital Region

Stephen Canaras, EY

Steve has been a dedicated member of the NFTE Capital Advisory Board for for years. During that time he has helped to build volunteerism in the Baltimore area. He leads our partnership with the EY Baltimore office and has worked to support innovation days and coaching events throughout the region. We thank you, Steve, for your commitment and dedication to the promise of entrepreneurship education!

Mid-Atlantic Region

Christiaan Van Driel, UBS

In his first year volunteering with NFTE, Christiaan has worked with NFTE students on over 20 occasions, and he devoted five months of his time to advising a NFTE alumnus taking part in the Founders Forum. Christiaan also played a crucial role in coordinating this past year's Youth Entrepreneurship Summit at UBS offices in downtown Manhattan, drawing over 50 volunteers and having an impact on over 100 NFTE learners! Christiaan exudes unparalleled enthusiasm for NFTE, and it only takes a single conversation with him to ascertain his devotion to our mission.

Midwest Region

Laura Kline, EY

Laura's selection as the Midwest Region's Volunteer of the Year is a testament to her outstanding dedication and selflessness. Laura has consistently and enthusiastically served as a champion for our young entrepreneurs! Not only has she served as an exceptional business coach, but she has done a phenomenal job recruiting and energizing volunteer coaches to mentor our students. She has also gone above and beyond to create meaningful experiences for some of our most underserved communities, including pivoting mid-year to ensure that multiple schools without the technology infrastructure to support a virtual experience, have a highly engaging in-person coaching session.

South Region

Evelyn Solorzano, Bank of America

Evelyn has been a staple volunteer in the NFTE South region the past three years. She is always willing and eager to serve as a mentor, jump in to judge a competition, or just show up in support of the region at NFTE events. She has acted as a conduit to other volunteers and is always the first to raise her hand to do the work of adding great value to our programs. Evelyn shares her own personal story with our young entrepreneurs, telling them about facing the challenges that life put in her way as a young person, and how she approached and overcame each of them. She is an inspiration to us all. As a fiercely energetic and loyal supporter of all that NFTE does, we are honored to recognize her!

Southeast Region

Anthony Hazen, Link Logistics Real Estate

NFTE has a special place in Anthony's heart because it provides education and opportunities for advancement to youth who otherwise would not be afforded the opportunity. Originally from Detroit, Michigan, Anthony moved to sunny Miami in 2009. He has been in the real estate industry

Volunteer of the Year (cont'd.)

for 20 years, currently as a Sr. Property Manager for Link Logistics. Anthony's hobbies include fitness, cars and international travel. He has a thirst for knowledge and most recently has been learning how the block chain is going to revolutionize commerce. NFTE is proud to honor Anthony for all the work he has done for, and commitment he gives to, our students and teachers in the Southeast.

West Region

Nikki Tran-Dell'Eva, BMO

Over the course of five years, Nikki has devoted over 200 hours of her time to serving as a business plan coach, judge, and mentor for NFTE students in the San Francisco area. Nikki has played a pivotal role in shaping the entrepreneurial aspirations of these young individuals and helping them to explore the confidence and skills necessary to navigate the competitive business landscape. Not only is Nikki's impact reaching our students, but she also serves as a guiding light for other volunteers, always among the first to step in and offer assistance and guidance. Moreover, Nikki's commitment extends beyond local boundaries, as she readily volunteers for virtual events across the country, showcasing her willingness to serve and support wherever there is a need. Nikki is an exemplary role model whose contributions merit recognition and celebration.

[JOIN NFTE'S VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY! CLICK HERE TO REGISTER.](#)



Corporate Volunteer of the Year

A key component of NFTE's programming is the involvement of local volunteers who create bridges from classroom learning to real world application, helping students build their personal and professional networks. This year we honor Citizens Bank for their commitment to NFTE students and teachers.

Through the combined efforts of financial investment and human capital, Citizens Bank has profoundly impacted hundreds of students across the NFTE New England and Mid-Atlantic regions, empowering young people to develop the entrepreneurial mindset and skills necessary for success in the modern economy. Throughout both regions, Citizens Bank volunteers have guided and inspired NFTE students as coaches, judges, speakers, and workshop facilitators.

In New England specifically, engagement from executive leaders like Jim Uehlinger as well as the Citizens Public Affairs, Community Development, and Elev8 teams exemplifies their commitment to NFTE's mission. Citizens Bank provided special funding to support the NFTE Boston PIC Winter Camp, and the Citizens Financial Empowerment and Career Mentoring Program provided a group of NFTE alumni with a workshop focused on financial planning and managing paychecks. Citizens Bank has also facilitated other meaningful opportunities for NFTE, including a Small Business Lunch and Learn session and roundtable discussions with community stakeholders, enabling NFTE to connect with like-minded community leaders, fostering collaboration and advocating for equitable change in the region.

NFTE recognizes and values the dedication of corporate volunteers as one of our most powerful catalysts for transforming and impacting a young person's vision of themselves and their future opportunities; measurably enhancing learning; and creating ongoing, lasting relationships. We thank and salute Citizens for its financial support of NFTE's mission and the Citizens Bank volunteers for igniting youth success across the country.





Highlights from the 2023 Challenge (c) Kristy Liebowitz

Inclusive Innovator Award



The Inclusive Innovator Award has been made possible through a generous grant from the MetLife Foundation. This Award celebrates the spirit of innovation and inclusion that drives social change and economic opportunity for all, and the perseverance, grit and fortitude required to face a significant health challenge or physical disability. Awardees have created an accessibility-focused business idea that aims to improve the lives of people with disabilities, and/or fully embraced the entrepreneurial mindset while facing a significant physical or health-related challenge.

Naije'e Hanley (she/her)
NFTE Class of 2019
BigGurlzMove
Las Vegas, NV



Naije'e Hanley has been dancing all her life. As a child, she faced a lot of trauma between abuse, neglect, the stresses inherent in the foster care system, and even the body dismorphia faced by many "curvy" girls. For much of her life, dance was Naije'e's way of staying happy, and when given the opportunity to create a business idea for her NFTE class, she worked with her teacher to turn her love of dance into a business that could offer the healing and positive effects of dancing to others.

In recent years, Naije'e faced a diagnosis of ovarian cancer and found herself discouraged and slipping away from dance while facing her difficult course of treatment. When she returned to dance, she realized the powerful therapy that she had been missing! Now as a cancer survivor, she is re-embracing her business idea with the goal to show others that no matter the physical or mental health trials they may face, they can be loved, express themselves, and find joy and healing through movement.

At BigGurlzMove, the studio will not only teach dance steps but encourage students to use movement to express themselves, face and deal with their emotions, find healing through exercise, and become part of a supportive community. BigGurlzMove is for people of all nationalities with or without dancing experience, those dealing with a trauma, and those who just love to dance.

FUEL a FUTURE

Full of Leaders Like Me



PLEDGE YOUR SUPPORT

Do you envision a future full of achievers and leaders like the students you've seen pitch today? Join NFTE in pledging your support for a global celebration of Youth Entrepreneurship Day on November 15.

You can help a young person from an under-resourced community own their future. Our goal is to generate support to provide high-quality entrepreneurship education to 400 new students. Will you help change the life of a young person forever?



give today at:
[nfte.com/fuelafuture](https://www.nfte.com/fuelafuture)

Each new dollar unlocks a 25% matching gift.
Every dollar helps a student own their future.



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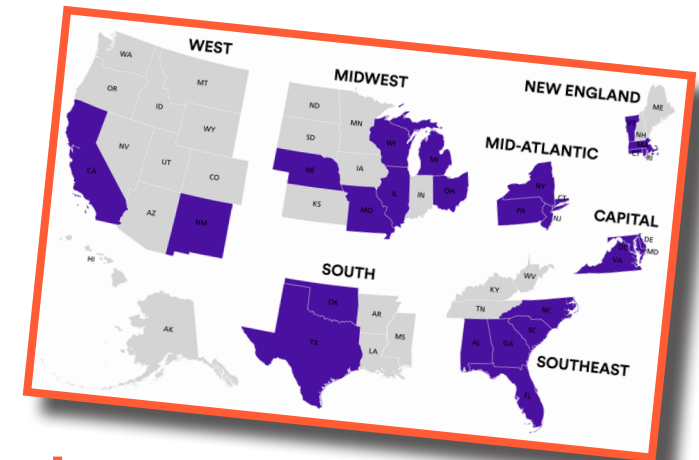
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Get Involved

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 provides students with opportunities to build skills, confidence, and know-how to recognize opportunities, discover their passions, develop their talents, and grow their networks. Young people who complete NFTE's entrepreneurship programs are more likely to engage in learning, achieve their educational and career goals, launch businesses, have increased lifetime earnings, and feel greater job satisfaction. 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. Visit www.nfte.com to learn more.

#NFTEChallenge

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