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*Midwest*

**YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
CHALLENGE 2025**

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## Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship Midwest Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge

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# Agenda

## NFTE Midwest Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge Tuesday, May 20, 2025

- Event Host** Raahi Pachbhai, **NFTE Class of 2024**, **Lights On**
- Judges** Jennifer L. Husbands, PhD, **Steward Education Advisors**  
Fatima Iqbal, **Traub & Associates** and **Naz Exotic Auto**  
Sholape Kolawole, **EY Parthenon**  
Marcus A. Payne, **Ingredion, Inc.**  
Aaron Trinidad, **Ogilvy**, **NFTE 2022**
- Student Finalists** **Easy Fit** - Joshua Mallory - Chicago Hope Academy  
**Fye Haven** - Aminah Taylor - Saint Louis Science Center  
**Goal House** - Prince Amankwaa - Horizon Science Academy, Columbus, OH
- Teacher Awards** Lauren Patrick, **Lead Program Associate, NFTE Midwest**
- E1 Fast Pitch Competition - 3 business ideas**  
**E2 Fast Pitch Competition - 4 businesses**
- Volunteer Awards** Dr. Scott Nasatir, **Executive Director, NFTE Midwest**  
*presented to:*  
**Kristoffer Kizer**  
**ShipBob**
- Closing Remarks** Dr. J. D. LaRock, **President & CEO, NFTE**
- Winner Announcements**





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At EY, we're proud to support the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship. It's one of the ways we're helping to make our community a better place to work and live. A better and brighter future starts with all of us.

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

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# Event Host

**Raahi Pachbhai**  
CEO & Founder, Lights On  
*NFTE Class of 2024*



Raahi is an award-winning entrepreneur, student-athlete, and STEM leader with a passion for inclusion and innovation. As the CEO and founder of Lights On, she empowers individuals with limb differences through stylish, affordable adaptive fashion and prosthetic integration.

A trilingual changemaker with roots in both America and India, Raahi brings global perspective and local impact to everything she does. She is a certified Intuit Design for Delight entrepreneur, NFTE St. Louis and STEM BizCamp champion, winner of the 2025 NFTE Midwest E2 Investment Pitch Challenge, and a proud mentor, Best Buddies board member, and advocate. Her empathy, energy, and authenticity light up every room—making her the perfect host for today’s event.



Raahi pitching in 2024 (c) Carasco Photography



# Judges

## Jennifer L. Husbands, PhD

Founder

*Steward Education Advisors*

Jennifer L. Husbands, PhD, is the founder of Steward Education Advisors, a consulting firm offering strategic advising to leaders of school districts, nonprofits, and foundations.

Throughout her 25+ year career in education, the focus of Jennifer's work has been designing adult learning that drives improvement in student outcomes. As a Senior Program Officer at the Gates Foundation from 2018-2024, she led the national Community of Practice for the Networks for School Improvement.

She has convened networks of schools, advised leaders at low-performing schools on improvement strategies, and trained staff starting new schools. She led the nation's first charter school-based, state-approved teacher certification program and launched an innovative graduate school of education within a K-12 charter network.

Jennifer earned her PhD from Stanford University's Graduate School of Education and her BA from the University of Virginia. She currently serves on the advisory boards of the Chicago Children's Museum and the Chicago Public Education Foundation and is an active member of Education Leaders of Color (EdLoC).



## Fatima Iqbal

Discovery Specialist

*Traub & Associates*

CEO

*Naz Exotic Auto*

Fatima Iqbal is a Discovery Specialist at Traub & Associates and CEO of Naz Exotic Auto.

With over 8 years of experience in the Law and Automotive industry, Fatima deals with a various amount of spontaneous occurrences, great opportunities, and achievements on a daily basis.

Fatima is fluent in 4 different languages including Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi and Spanish. She is a first generation college graduate and business owner in her family hopefully teaching the ropes to her intelligent and beautiful 5 year old daughter.



2024 Challenge highlights (c) Carasco Photography

# Judges, continued

## Sholape Kolawole

Partner

*EY Parthenon*

Sholape is a Partner in EY Parthenon serving as a client executive to multiple clients. He has experience providing strategy and transaction advisory services for 25+ years in industry and consulting with a focus on delivering strategy and operations, finance transformation and Mergers & Acquisitions projects. Sholape's primary sector is Consumer and Health. He currently serves as an Executive Committee member of a major EY Life Sciences account and spends majority of his time advising life sciences clients. In addition, he is the BU office Leader for EYP's second largest office in Chicago



Sholape's specific areas of subject matter expertise include pre- and day-one M&A operational execution, operating model optimization, post-merger integration, digital and strategic finance transformation, financial planning and organization process improvement.

Prior to EY, Sholape was a Principal in The Hackett Group for 12 years overseeing finance transformations and technology implementations with responsibility for growing the Consumer Sector. Prior to Hackett, he also was a post-merger integration specialist at Sears and worked at Whirlpool and PwC.

Sholape holds a bachelor's in Accounting from Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria, and an MBA with a Finance focus from Cornell University, New York. He enjoys spending time with his family, traveling and writing fiction.

## Marcus A. Payne

Vice President, Operations

*Ingredion*

Marcus A. Payne, a native of Cincinnati, Ohio, has been a resident of the Chicagoland community for over 40 years. A graduate of Northwestern University with a bachelor of science degree in Industrial Engineering and Management Science and a master's degree in Management from the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern. Payne is employed by Ingredion Incorporated as Vice President Operations, US/Canada where he leads an organization that supports the Food and Industrial Ingredients Business Unit. Ingredion is a leading global ingredients solutions company producing sweeteners, starches, nutrition ingredients and biomaterials that are used by customers in everyday products from foods and beverages to paper and pharmaceuticals. He has worked at Ingredion for over 35 years and has an extensive background in manufacturing management, quality/food safety, continuous improvement and EHSS. He is also a founding member and Executive Sponsor of Ingredion's business resource group A.B.L.E. (Alliance of Black Employees). In addition, Payne served as an Adjunct Professor at Trinity International University for 16 years, teaching undergraduate courses in business, non-profit management and organizational leadership.



His professional and service affiliations have included: American Society of Quality, Institute of Food Technologist, Institute of Validation Technology, INROADS, Inc., Promise Keepers, Junior Achievement, Chicago Year Up (board member), Chicago ToolBank (Board Vice President), and currently serves as Board Chairman of the IDeaL Education Foundation. He is the founding organizer and executive sponsor of Pack/Troop 350 of the Boy Scouts of America, working with elementary thru high school age boys residing in Dolton, IL and surrounding communities.

Marcus has been married for almost 36 years to Zefferine and is the proud father of 4 adult children, Marcus (Miranda), Brandon, Nicholas and Kayla.



# Judges, continued

**Aaron Trinidad**  
Account Management  
Ogilvy

*NFTE Class of 2019*

Aaron Trinidad is a recent graduate of DePauw University and was named NFTE's Top Young Entrepreneur in 2019 for his innovative business pitch, Lender. His experience with NFTE sparked an entrepreneurial spirit that has driven him to scale campus initiatives, earning him DePauw's highest student honor. Aaron has also built a diverse background in startups, social media, and advertising. He currently works full-time in the Account Management department at Ogilvy in Chicago, where he continues to grow his passion for strategy, creativity, and impactful storytelling. His interest in entrepreneurship remains strong, and he looks forward to exploring how that passion will take shape as he builds his career and pursues future ventures.



*Aaron pitching at the 2019 National Challenge (c) Margaret Fox*

# Finalist Businesses

**Easy Fit** - Joshua Mallory - [Chicago Hope Academy](#)

25 million people with upper body mobility challenges struggle to find stylish, high-quality clothing, and often spend too much time searching for suitable options. We create accessible dress shirts with magnetic closures, providing a fashionable and functional solution for younger individuals, including those in the AMC (Arthrogryposis Multiplex Congenita) community.

**Fye Haven** - Aminah Taylor - [Saint Louis Science Center](#)

Fye Haven provides individuals with autism a bridge between therapy and everyday life, fostering independence and growth through accessible, tailored support. In-person services will include workshops on life skills, conflict resolution, social integration, and networking. In addition, Fye Haven will feature a customizable mobile app with sensory-friendly lessons, career readiness, and interactive tools. Our goal is to empower those with autism by providing life skills, confidence, and autonomy for lasting success.

**Goal House** - Prince Amankwaa - [Horizon Science Academy, Columbus, OH](#)

Many kids in Columbus—especially in lower-income neighborhoods—love soccer but can't access quality training due to high costs, distant locations, or lack of community support. Big-name soccer camps often overlook these areas, leaving talented youth behind and no mentors who understand their struggles. Goal House solves this by bringing affordable, high-quality soccer camps directly to these underserved neighborhoods. Through skilled coaches from the same communities, a mentorship system, and a commitment to giving back (donating part of profits to local orphanages), Goal House creates not just athletes—but leaders. With a fun, family-like environment and the slogan "Come Kick It", Goal House camp builds both soccer skills and a strong character in these children.

# NFTE Midwest Advisory Board

**Pramit Mehta, (Chair)** EY

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**Kevin Wilson,** St. Louis Small Business Empowerment Center

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## Learn more about NFTE

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

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

# 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, Kristoffer Kizer.**



Kristoffer Kizer has been an invaluable volunteer with NFTE for over four years, contributing significantly to the advancement of NFTE's mission to empower young entrepreneurs. As a business plan coach, mentor, and judge, Kristoffer has directly impacted the success and growth of countless NFTE students. His expertise and dedication have helped students develop solid business plans, prepare for pitch competitions, and hone their entrepreneurial skills. Kristoffer's commitment to NFTE goes beyond individual mentorship. He has been a key participant in NFTE Midwest's Guest Speaker Series, sharing his experiences and insights with students, teachers, and alumni. Furthermore, his work with the national team as a Founders Forum coach demonstrates his leadership and passion for shaping the next generation of entrepreneurs.

We are also proud to honor our **Corporate Volunteer of the Year, ShipBob.**



ShipBob's volunteer efforts go far beyond traditional service—ShipBob has made a powerful impact through their dedication to providing intensive coaching for students in our region, helping to build confidence, career readiness, and critical life skills. What truly sets ShipBob apart is their willingness to go the extra mile—not only did their team provide consistent, high-quality coaching for students in Chicago, but they also stepped up to support programming in St. Louis. This kind of cross-regional commitment speaks volumes about their culture of service and belief in the potential of every student.

Their volunteers bring real-world experience, empathy, and actionable feedback to every session, creating connections that leave a lasting impression. ShipBob's approach is intentionally focused on long-term growth for the students they coach, not just short-term engagement. Their partnership has been a game changer, and their dedication to scaling that impact distinguishes them from other companies.

# E1 Fast Pitch Challengers

An elevator pitch is a concise and compelling summary used to introduce oneself, a business, a product, or an idea in a short amount of time, typically within the duration of an elevator ride (about 30-60 seconds). It is designed to capture attention and spark interest, often used when pitching to potential investors or customers.

These three competitors were the winners of their NFTE Semi-final competitions and are excited to share their business ideas with us today.

## U-Do Auto Repair

Whitney M. Young Magnet High School

*Timothy Edwards*

## Busy Bees

Dreamchasers

*Mariah Thomas*

## Rise & Thrive

Saint Louis Science Center

*My'Ye Mitchell*



2024 Challenge fast pitch (c) Carasco Photography

# E2 Fast Pitch

In NFTE's advanced Entrepreneurship 2 course, students deepen their entrepreneurial mindset while refining their business models, developing their products or services, mastering sales and marketing, finance, and small business management skills.

Upon completion of E2, students are prepared to take the Certiport Entrepreneurship and Small Business (ESB) certification exam.

The full E2 Investment Pitch Competition took place recently via Zoom, and we are fortunate to get to hear them pitch this evening.

## Fresh Fusion

Perspectives Leadership Academy

*Vershaun Mitchell*

*Ru Dorns*

*Germaine Henderson*

## Lights On

Saint Louis Science Center

*Raahi Pachbhai*

## Slick Cuts

Perspectives Leadership Academy

*Acyla Brister*

*Christopher Smith*

## Vegan Vanity

Perspectives Charter Schools

*Akira Nash*

*Ziane Harris*



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



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Empowering youth through entrepreneurial education to foster economic resilience and growth in a rapidly changing world.

We are inspired by these students' drive to make a positive impact and excited to see their solutions unfold in the real world. - Zuora

[www.zuora.com](http://www.zuora.com)



## 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.

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We are pleased to support NFTE's efforts to help activate entrepreneurial mindsets through volunteerism.

We are proud of our employee volunteers who contribute their time and skills to advance NFTE's impact.







Network for Teaching  
Entrepreneurship

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