



nfte!

**West - Southern California
YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP
CHALLENGE 2024**



**Loyola Marymount University
Fred Kiesner Center
for Entrepreneurship**



**SATURDAY,
JUNE 1**



**10:00 AM -
1:00 PM**



**LMU Coll. of Business Admin.
Hilton Center for Business
1 LMU Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90045**

Presented by



Welcome

Welcome to the NFTE West SoCal Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge Finals! Today, we celebrate our remarkable young entrepreneurs, along with their teachers and school leaders who prioritize entrepreneurship education in their communities and collaborate with us to cultivate the next generation of leaders.

The Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) is dedicated to sparking the entrepreneurial spirit through unique learning experiences that empower students to take control of their futures. Now more than ever, it is crucial to nurture the next generation of thinkers, creators, and problem solvers. NFTE West has worked together with educators, students, coaches, and partners to empower students. Together, we are not only shaping their futures but creating a more vibrant society.

We hope that today serves as both an inspiration and a motivation for you to support our students. There are many more young entrepreneurs in our region who would benefit from our programs. If you are inspired by our students today, take action - volunteer, donate, get your company involved, or reach out to the NFTE West team to arrange a meeting. Please join us in our mission to help students realize how to leverage their knowledge, maximize their potential, and become innovators. Together, we can empower students to take charge of their futures.

We would like to take a moment to honor our educators for their unwavering dedication to our students throughout this year. The success of these students and everything NFTE does is only possible because of you. We could not achieve all that we do without you.

We want to express our gratitude to our volunteer coaches and corporate and individual partners who have continued to support NFTE's work with students and teachers despite the ever-changing economy. Thank you for your commitment to our work and to providing our students with unique insights, opportunities, and tools through your vast expertise.

Last but certainly not least, we extend our warmest congratulations to all of today's competitors. Your hard work and dedication have brought you to the NFTE West SoCal Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge Finals, and we couldn't be prouder of your achievements. Each one of you is a shining example of the entrepreneurial spirit we aim to ignite.

The NFTE West Team

Tim Blaylock, Executive Director
Kristina Caberto Wallace, Development Director
Max Rusike-Griffith, Program Director
Cheyanne Ornelas, Volunteer Program Associate
Lea Bruder, Development Associate
Cristopher Bautista, Program Manager

2 Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge

Agenda

NFTE West - SoCal Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge

Saturday, June 1, 2024

hosted by:



Loyola Marymount University
**Fred Kiesner Center
for Entrepreneurship**

Emcee	Amylah Charles, Curlycrownz Hair Care , NFTE 2021
Judges	Vivek Bhuta, EY Parthenon Sheila Emami, St. Cloud Capital Sadiya Gosla, Citibank Gary Rabishaw, Intrepid Investment Bankers Brittany Trick, US Bank
Student Finalists	Anyone Can Game (ACG) - David Gutierrez - Florence Nightingale Middle School Scholar Brilliance - Lucio Hightower-Rojas - Los Angeles Urban League BugBGone - Francesca Vicente and Louie Zeno - Florence Nightingale Middle School Almndmlk - Solonia Allen - Los Angeles Urban League Serentiy - Katilyn Sanchez - Foshay Learning Center Bow-Ache - Mikayla Hsiao - Foshay Learning Center
Volunteer Award	Tim Blaylock, Executive Director, NFTE West <i>presented to:</i> Cathay Bank
Remarks	Jose Garcia, Assistant Director, Fred Keisner Center for Entrepreneurship at LMU, NFTE 2013
Winner Announcements and Closing	Dr. J. D. LaRock, President & CEO, NFTE

Whose tomorrow will you change today?

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

Learn more at ey.com/us/cr



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



Building a better
working world

Master of Ceremonies

Amylah Charles Curlycrownz Hair Care *NFTE Class of 2021*

Amylah Charles is an entertainer, activist, and Forbes featured entrepreneur on the rise, who is the founder of Curlycrownz Hair Care. In 2020, she launched a line of hair care products. Amylah's business produces opulent and naturally based hair products. She is also the proud winner of several National business competitions.



Amylah went from competing in Los Angeles to Wall Street and Austria. Her goal is to bring equity to the hair care industry by providing products for several states of hair in Black and Brown communities. Her motto is: "Be everything outside of the box people try to put you in!"

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

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

An idea we can all get behind.

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

Citi Foundation



Judges

Vivek Bhuta

Senior Director, Strategy & Transactions

EY Parthenon

Vivek Bhuta is a Senior Director at EY Parthenon focusing on Mergers & Acquisitions transactions, strategic planning, enterprise cost and cash transformations. He has been with EY now for more than eight years.

Vivek has 15 years of global management consulting and industry experience serving clients across several industries in corporate and private equity firms.

Prior to EY, Vivek worked at PwC in their Strategy and PRTM Management Consulting verticals focused on supply chain and operations strategy.

Vivek has a Master of Science, Engineering Management from the University of Southern California.



Sheila Emami

Vice President

St. Cloud Capital

Sheila Emami is a Vice President at St. Cloud and is responsible for sourcing, execution, and portfolio monitoring functions. She has over 10 years of experience in originations, structuring, and underwriting of senior credit facilities to middle market companies in a variety of industries including private equity-backed consumer product, shipping and logistics, technology, manufacturing, and retail. Previously, Ms. Emami worked in leveraged finance and corporate banking roles at various corporate and commercial banks. She currently serves as an Observer on the Board of Directors of JibJab, LLC and serves on the Western Region Committee for the Small Business Investor Alliance (“SBIA”).

Ms. Emami earned her BA in Economics from Pitzer College and is a graduate of the Summer Institute for General Management from Stanford University’s Graduate School of Business. She is an alumna of Wells Fargo’s Credit Management Training Program.



2023 Challenge highlights (c) Zachary Borja

Judges, *continued*

Sadiya Gosla

VP, Branch Manager

Citibank

Sadiya Gosla is a Vice President and Branch Manager for Citibank. Born and raised in sunny Southern California, Sadiya has never moved away due to the wonderful weather and outdoor activities we have year round. She is a first generation Indian American and her parents migrated to the United States to attend university in hopes for a better life for their children.



Sadiya started her career in banking by working part time as a teller, due to the tuition assistance the bank provided as well as a fun working atmosphere while finishing her Bachelor's degree. She then grew her career within banking, and in doing so has developed strong interpersonal skills, money management skills and a passion for helping others succeed.

In her free time, Sadiya enjoys traveling the world and has thus far visited 26 countries (still counting)! She is also extremely passionate about giving back to the community and makes a point to incorporate volunteering while she explores new places in her travels abroad.



2023 Challenge highlights (c) Zachary Borja

Gary Rabishaw

Managing Director, Head of Commercial & Consumer Technology

Intrepid Investment Bankers, LLC

Gary is a Managing Director and Founding Principal of Intrepid. He is the Head of the Commercial & Consumer Technology practice. He has been involved in numerous domestic and cross-border transactions, including mergers and acquisitions, private equity capital raises and financing for companies spanning the consumer, industrials, healthcare, and business services sectors.

Prior to Intrepid, Gary worked for more than 10 years advising middle-market clients on mergers and acquisitions transactions at Barrington Associates and Wells Fargo Securities. Before joining Barrington in 2000, he was a Vice President in the Merchant Banking Group of Banque Paribas in Chicago. His experience there included underwriting and syndicating leveraged finance transactions and making direct equity investments in support of middle-market leveraged buyouts.

In 2010, Gary was selected to the M&A Advisor's inaugural "40 Under 40" list and in 2013 he was named among the "Most Influential M&A Advisors in Los Angeles" by the Los Angeles Business Journal. Gary frequently lectures on M&A topics at Pepperdine University.

He was born and raised in Chicago, is a die-hard Cubs fan, music enthusiast, decent guitar player, and a father to two fabulous kids, Zachary and Melanie.



Judges, *continued*

Brittany Trick

Small Business Sales Manager

US Bank

Brittany Trick is an accomplished Small Business Sales Manager with US Bank; overseeing a team that supports Small Business Banking in Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara counties. Brittany and her team work directly with business owners, empowering them with tools to help their businesses thrive. Brittany also works tirelessly with her internal partners, being a key stakeholder in project management and training development.



Brittany has over 12 years' experience in financial services, the majority of which has been focused on helping small business owners and entrepreneurs. The daughter of a small business owner, Brittany has a passion for adding value to small businesses and seeing them make a positive impact on their community.



Guest Speaker

Jose Garcia

Assistant Director, Fred Keisner Center for Entrepreneurship at LMU

NFTE Class of 2013

Jose Garcia took NFTE in 2012-2013, his senior year, at Environmental Charter High School from Brandi Cobb. At that age, he was already committed to shining a light on the underrepresented communities around him, and he started Hope Apparel to provide clothing, designed by artists in those communities, that was unique to the inner city areas so often overlooked among the glamour of Hollywood and celebrity around Los Angeles. He went on to represent Southern California at NFTE's 2013 National Challenge in New York that October.

After high school, Jose attended LMU where he majored in Psychology with an Entrepreneurship minor. Following his graduation, Jose worked as a marketing strategist, then worked with nonprofits and tech companies such as Snap Inc. and Microsoft to build educational programs that would help low-income students to attain positions in the tech industry.

More recently, Jose returned to LMU as the Assistant Director of the Fred Keisner Center for Entrepreneurship, while he pursues his M.B.A.



Jose presenting in 2013 (c) Margaret Fox Photography



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for Teaching Entrepreneurship
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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.*



Community
Impact

Finalist Businesses

Anyone Can Game (ACG) - David Gutierrez - Florence Nightingale Middle School

The mission of ACG is to provide those who are diagnosed with hearing impairment with a more immersive, augmented, and life-like experience when they play video games. The product is a video game synced smart jacket that includes and uses a raspberry pi mini computer and a built-in haptic system to allow inputs to activate vibration motors, augmented sound, and in-game synchronized lights.


Scholar Brilliance - Lucio Hightower-Rojas - Los Angeles Urban League
Scholar Brilliance is a mission-driven technology company that aims to revolutionize how students fund their education and pursue their academic passions. Our core offering is a comprehensive subscription software service designed to guide students through every step of the scholarship journey. By combining AI, an extensive scholarship database, writing assistance, organizational tools, and educational resources into one integrated platform, Scholar Brilliance provides students with a complete solution to navigate the scholarship landscape and maximize their chances of earning financial aid.

BugBGone - Francesca Vicente and Louie Zeno - Florence Nightingale Middle School

IBugBGone is a fumigation device that keeps bugs away with its scents. The device has a range of 10ft and comes in many different scents, like lavender, peppermint, and eucalyptus. These scents are good for personal reasons, like stress, and headaches, and help people with allergies breathe better. Not only do they benefit you personally, they also keep the pests away by confusing their sense of smell and causing them to freeze up, making them easier to kill.

Almndmlk - Solonia Allen - Los Angeles Urban League

Almndmlk is dedicated to creating irresistibly tasty vegan bundt cakes, using organic ingredients and our own exciting recipes. Our goal is to redefine the vegan dessert experience, catering to vegans and non-vegans alike. By offering plant-based based wholesome alternatives to traditional



cakes, we encourage individuals to make healthier dietary choices without compromising taste or satisfaction. We are committed to reducing our environmental footprint by using organic and plant-based ingredients as well as eco-friendly packaging. This is Almndmlk, where you can have your cake and eat it too.

Serenti - Katilyn Sanchez - Foshay Learning Center

Serenity's mission is to create a hand cream with simple ingredients in order to restore, renew, and revive sensitive, dry, damaged, and dermatitis-prone skin. The product includes ingredients such as glycerin (to increase skin hydration), mango butter (to soothe skin), beeswax (to promote skin regeneration), colloidal oatmeal (to bind and lock in moisture), and hyaluronic acid (to help skin stretch and flex). All these ingredients are ideal for a hand cream that helps improve sensitive skin.

Bow-Ache - Mikayla Hsiao - Foshay Learning Center

At Bow-Ache we seek to provide a non-pharmaceutical, all natural headache relief option to help reduce and relieve severity of migraines. As we target the 26 million women in the United States who suffer from migraines, especially those with higher stress levels, we desire to provide a convenient, cute, and affordable form of relief. Many are looking for a migraine relief option that allows them to not have to swallow a pill but also something that they can wear as they continue to work.



2023 Challenge finalists & judges (c) Zachary Borja

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

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, Nikki Tran-Dell'Eva** of BMO.

Nikki's selection as the West Region's Volunteer of the Year is a testament to her outstanding dedication and selflessness. Over the course of five years, she 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. Nikki's boundless enthusiasm, coupled with her profound impact on the community, truly embodies the spirit of volunteerism at its finest.

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. Her efforts and willingness to go above and beyond exemplify the true spirit of volunteerism, making her an invaluable asset to our organization and a deserving candidate for this prestigious honor. 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.

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



Cathay Bank has been steadfast in its commitment to advancing the NFTE mission since 2008, primarily focusing on the Los Angeles area while extending its reach across the West Region. Cathay Bank's employees actively engage as volunteers, contributing their time and expertise to empower NFTE students, alumni, and teachers nationwide. Through this collaborative effort, Cathay Bank not only provides essential resources but also fosters a culture of mentorship and support, enriching the NFTE community and nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit among its participants. We are proud to celebrate Cathay Bank!



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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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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.



Network for Teaching
Entrepreneurship

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