

9th Entrepreneurship Con.

Youth entrepreneurship was in full swing early this spring as the largest entrepreneurship conference for young people ages 8 to 18 in the United States was held at the Four Points by Sheraton in Milwaukee, WI March 29 through March 31, 2006. For two straight days students from across the U.S. learned about the types of businesses their peers were developing and operating, the process of turning an idea into a business as well as some important tools for marketing their ideas. Experienced entrepreneurs were also on hand to share their personal stories of success to inspire and motivate the next generation of entrepreneurs. The following are some of the highlights from the conference.

Flea Market/Mercado

In a conference room filled with bright and energetic students, young entrepreneurs were able to showcase their businesses and sell their products to conference participants. Participants included Nikita's Creations a home décor, and silk floral arrangements company run by Trenton, NJ student Nakita Williamson and Flat Line Records a local Milwaukee company run by three friends who started their company with \$300 and no sign and promote local bands to high school and college crowds.

{wma}Flatline-Records{/wma}

[Click to listen to audio interview](#)

Business Showcase and Competition

Students who run their own businesses showcased their products and services to judges and conference participants to compete for cash and prizes. Prizes include five laptop computers, \$2,000 in cash and more. Students were required to submit a written business plan prior to the conference, create a business display and develop a 4-minute verbal business presentation. One of the standout companies was Pocket Socks run by Brittney Maye & LaDonna Watts of Chicago, IL. Their unique idea combined a small storage compartment into one of our everyday items of clothing . . . our socks.

Advertising Competition

Teams of students competed for cash and prizes in the advertising competition. Each group were given a set of props and other supplies in which to create a product. The team was then responsible for crafting a short commercial with their newly created product on display. Some of the notable participants were 17 year-old Cameron Gardner of Cairo, IL whose team place third in the competition for their product, Kung Fu Cola-The Drink That Really Kicks!

Elevator Speech Competition

Students who had planned, but not yet started a new business were able to enter and present their idea to judges for a chance to win \$200 as a start-up grant. Called 'Elevator Speeches' because students needed to be able to

present their idea in a very short time (as if the judges were in an elevator with them, captive for just a few minutes). Students were given 5 minutes to present their business idea to a panel of judges, plus 5 minutes for questions and answers.

Break Out Sessions

Students were able to take advantage of other learning opportunities as entrepreneurs and other professionals including Clay Moore owner of C&J Foods, a Milwaukee, WI grocery store, Dr. Rich Bailey practicing dentist and inventor of Billy Bob Teeth (appearing with Jay Leno and The Today Show with Katie Couric) and others provided assistance for starting businesses. Some of the breakout sessions available for students to attend included: Entrepreneurship and Food, Marketing Yourself and Your Business, and How to Write a Business Plan.

Teacher & Parent Track

There was something for everyone as special sessions for educators who wished to integrate entrepreneurship into their classrooms and parents interested in mentoring their child through the small business process were available. The topics included "Stepping Up to the Next Level of Entrepreneurship Education" and "Entrepreneurship Learning Standards, a Roadmap for Life Long Learning";

Click on the images below to listen to the corresponding interviews.