

News Release

For immediate release

RICHARDSON, Texas (July 26, 2010) - While thousands of teenagers hit the beach or slept late this summer, a group of their peers spent part of their summer break learning practical skills to prepare them for today's business world.



Benjamin H. Starr, Marielle Lopez, Dr. Joseph Picken, Nancy J. Hong, Darlene Norsch, Madison Pedigo

The Champs Sarah Hanna	Prestige Worldwide Erik Martinez	Mango United Ben Morrow	Smead Dennis Rogers	Whip U Jason Addams
Yesenia Meza	Braven Griffin	Ahron Menghani	Michael Reyes	Shaun Malviya
Wynne Kerridge	Anais Gonzalez	Huey Mitchell	Alanna Fenwick	Cary Kuo
Jonathan Ng	Tony Ma	Helen Tien	Sohum Daftary	Andy Hsieh
Anu Jayasinghe	Jordan Anderson	Zach Yau	Emily Bao	Joshua Edwards
Jared Davis	Bryant McPherson	Raul Seagovia	Darwin Leu	Jonathan Machado

The **Innovation Opportunity Camp** was hosted by the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at UT Dallas. A group of 25 students come from as far as Hong Kong, Illinois, Queen City, Amarillo and the DFW area to learn the ins and outs of starting a business. Not only did the students have an opportunity to explore entrepreneurship, meet and interact with successful entrepreneurs, participate in team-based activities mentored by UTD graduate students, develop presentation & communication skills and see cutting edge science & research in action, but they also learned from UT Dallas faculty, professional investors and entrepreneurs.

Minding Their Business

At the Innovation Opportunity Camp, 25 students, most from Dallas-area schools, worked in teams under the direction of UT Dallas student mentors and many volunteers to develop a business idea, polish their presentation skills and pitch the ideas to a panel of judges in an “elevator pitch” competition and a full business idea competition. The university’s Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (IIE) launched its first teen entrepreneurial camp, partially underwritten by a grant from the Texas Instruments Foundation, in June 2009.

“The things you learn at this camp are forever,” said Marielle Lopez, a senior at Plano East Senior High School. “You can’t just wait for an opportunity to come to you. You have to go get it yourself. If you’ve got dreams, just go for it. There are no shortcuts to dreams.”

A camper last year, Lopez served as a volunteer this year and spoke to the students during the business idea competition finals on the last day of camp. Dr. Joseph Picken, IIE executive director, announced the judges’ top picks for the elevator pitch contest and business idea competition.

Picken told the audience judges had a tough time deciding on the students’ ideas that ranged from a college admissions evaluation based on individual accomplishments to an ultrasonic sound generator to repel birds from airline runways. Each of the five teams gave a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation to judges outlining their businesses’ goals, market opportunity, production costs and return on investment.

In the end, Mango United's portal for trading cooking essentials won the judges' top vote, earning each of the five team members \$75. The team developed a website, www.cups ofsugar.com, that combines social networking with cooking and organic gardening. Unlike Craigslist or Facebook, the website is area-specific and allows users to trade spices, kitchen appliances and organic backyard-grown products.

"Say you're going to make a Japanese dish and need miso. You can't find it at the grocery store and you only need a pinch," said Helen Tien, Mango's CEO and Plano East Senior High School "You can go to our website, type in miso, see who has it and trade with them."

Business Idea Competition winners:

1st place (\$75 each) – **Mango United**, portal for trading cooking essentials: Ahron Menghani, Clark High School; Huey Mitchell, Little Elm High School; Raul Segovia, W.W. Samuel High School; Helen Tien, Plano East Senior High School; and Zack Yau, Vines Hines High School

2nd place (\$50 each) – **Champs**, vampire energy: Jared Davis, home school; Anuruddha Jayasinghe, North Hills Preparatory; Wynne Kerridge, Highland Park High School; Yesenia Meza, Hockaday High School; and Jonathan Ng, Hong Kong International

3rd place (\$30 each) – **Smead**, ultrasonic sound generators to repel birds from airline runways: Emily Bao, Hockaday High School; Sohumi Daftary, Greenhill High School; Alanna Fenwick, Canyon High School; Darwin Leu, Plano Senior High School; and Michael Reyes, J.J. Pearce High School

Elevator Pitch competition winners:

1st place (\$50) – Braven Griffin, Queen City High School, Queen City, TX

2nd place (\$30) – Emily Bao, Hockaday High School

3rd place (\$20) – Helen Tien, Plano East Senior High School

After the celebration, Dr. Picken thanked the faculty, staff and group of more than fifty community volunteers (entrepreneurs and investors) who participated in the camp and announced next year's date, June 13 to June 24. Many students expressed their interest in coming back to volunteer for the camp next year.