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Río Hondo College's Entrepreneur Camp Río Teaches Students to Become Young Business Owners

WHITTIER – Seventeen high school students put their business skills and passion into action at Río Hondo College's annual Entrepreneur Camp Río, a two-week camp that teaches students how to achieve success as young entrepreneurs.

The camp was led by Río Hondo College faculty members certified by the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE). Students learned how to identify business opportunities, construct a financial model and create a marketing and sales strategy. The camp welcomed students from seven schools in the area including Arroyo, El Monte, El Rancho, Gabrielino, Glen A. Wilson, La Serena and Mark Keppel high schools.

"I was highly impressed with every student that attended Entrepreneur Camp Río," said Marissa Young, Business Management Instructor at Río Hondo College. "They were completely engaged and excited about innovation and entrepreneurship."

The camp culminated with students developing and pitching an original business plan in hopes of winning cash prizes donated by Río Hondo College's Dean of Business, Gita Runkle. Competition judges included representatives from Lemelson-MIT, UC Berkeley, UC San Diego, and the Michelson Institute for Intellectual Property.

Mark Keppel High School sophomore Xiushan Lu won first place for the project "Earth's Paints," which are tubes of eco-friendly acrylic paint that combine Lu's passion for art with a desire to reduce pollution.

"At the time, I had recently come out of a class that really went over the effects of pollution and how serious the problem has become," Lu said. "I thought that doing a project that worked to reduce pollution would bring attention to the severity of the issue."

Mark Keppel High School junior Joleen Wong won third place for her development of "Costno," a nonprofit organization that would ship free school supplies to teachers and low-income students to help with school performance.

MORE

Río Hondo College is an educational and community partner committed to advancing social justice and equity as an antiracist institution that collectively invests in all students' academic and career pathways that lead to attainment of degree, certificate, transfer, and lifelong-learning goals. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit www.riohondo.edu.

Wong loved her time at Entrepreneur Camp Río, particularly because of the one-on-one mentorship opportunities that helped her explore new ideas and kept her on track.

“Entrepreneur Camp Río is a fantastic way for our College’s Business Division to nurture the minds of future business owners and inventors,” Superintendent/President Dr. Marilyn Flores said. “The ideas and projects that were created in this two-week period are phenomenal – we’re honored to host such an amazing event every year and we’re glad to be inspiring creativity in so many students.”

Students were eligible to participate in the camp for free thanks to funding from the California Community College Chancellor’s Office Strong Workforce Program.

The Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) is a global nonprofit organization that provides high-quality entrepreneurship education to middle and high school students from under-resourced communities, as well as programs for college students and adults. NFTE reaches 50,000+ students annually in 30 states across the U.S. and offers programs in 19 additional countries. They have educated more than a million students through in-school, out-of-school, college, and summer camp programs, offered in person and online. To learn more about how they are promoting inclusive capitalism and building the next generation of diverse entrepreneurs, visit www.nfte.com.

PHOTO CAPTION:

ENTREPRENEUR1: Río Hondo College’s class of high school students who participated in this year’s Entrepreneur Camp Río on Zoom, a two-week camp that taught students how to build business skills.

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