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Río Hondo College Inspires Business Acumen in High Schoolers at Entrepreneur Camp

WHITTIER – Río Hondo College motivated 30 area high school students to hone their management skills and creative thinking abilities during Entrepreneur Camp Río, a two-week camp that teaches students the ins and outs of business ownership.

The camp, which ran through Aug. 6, challenged students to think beyond their typical curriculum by diving into the world of finance, marketing and free enterprise. It was created through a partnership between Río Hondo College's Business Division and the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) to inspire the next generation of young business tycoons. The camp was funded through a \$20,000 California Community College Strong Workforce Grant, allowing all students to participate at no cost.

NFTE, an educational non-profit organization, aims to inspire students to pursue their entrepreneurial goals through project-based learning. The camp was taught by certified NFTE instructors, who outlined what it takes to create and maintain a business. Students also developed and pitched unique business plans for a competition, with the top three winners receiving cash prizes from Western Governors University.

Whittier High School sophomore Erik Villa won second place for his mobile dialysis e-cart business idea, which caters to dialysis patients with mobility issues. Villa said he was inspired by his father, who suffers from kidney disease and other illnesses.

"I developed an invention that I believe can help many people," Villa said. "My invention has a deep connection with me, so I was eager to have people interested in my product and see how passionate I am about it."

Villa said he learned invaluable project development and business management skills thanks to Entrepreneur Camp Río and plans to someday develop his idea into a real business.

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.

“Entrepreneur Camp Río is a perfect example of how we’re not only encouraging our students to achieve their career dreams, we’re also encouraging them to positively impact society,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. “The students who participated in this camp now have real skills and truly wonderful business ideas that can improve our world.”

Mark Keppel High School junior Kylie Lam saw the Entrepreneur Camp Río as a great way to fine tune her management skills, oral presentation abilities and overall professionalism. Lam won first place during the camp’s competition for a bubble tea company business pitch.

“As a business major who is undecided on which path to take in the industry, I signed up for this camp hoping that it would give me a feel of what it was like to be an entrepreneur,” Lam said.

Entrepreneur Camp Río Coordinator Ivan Leon said he was thrilled to help inspire students to start their own businesses by encouraging their future goals and ideas.

“I think it is imperative to offer a program such as this; it encourages innovation, financial freedom and the further well-being of our economy,” Leon said.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

ENTREPRENEUR1: Mark Keppel High School junior Kylie Lam, the first-place winner of the business pitch competition at Entrepreneur Camp Río, presents her business pitch for “LaBOBAtory”, a bubble tea company. The camp, held at Río Hondo College, teaches students about research and marketing to inspire the next generation of business owners.

ENTREPRENEUR2: Erik Villa, a sophomore at Whittier High School, pitches his idea for a mobile dialysis e-cart company called PDEC (Peritoneal Dialysis E-Cart), which won second place in the business pitch competition during Río Hondo College’s Entrepreneur Camp Río.

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