



Today's Students...Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs!

September 2006

STUDENTS SHINE AT DECD'S 6TH ANNUAL NFTE BIZPLAN COMPETITION

There was a definite buzz at the Hartford Hilton Hotel on June 6, 2006, as 18 distinguished judges from government, business, and banking throughout the state awarded the top three prizes in the 2006 Annual BizPlan Competition to **Jose Cuapio** from Metropolitan Business Academy in New Haven (first place); **Ivellisse Morales**, from Regional Hill Career High School in New Haven (second place) and **Nina To** from Hartford Public High School in Hartford (third place). The winners took the stage amid screams and cheers from their friends and business colleagues.



2006 BizPlan Winner Jose Cuapio

For Jose Cuapio, the moment of victory was especially sweet, since it was his second time competing, as he also participated in the 5th Annual BizPlan Competition.

Cuapio, who is from **Metropolitan Business Academy** in New Haven took the top prize with his winning business, "**Kozay Photo**" – a photography business specializing in black and white photographs. Cuapio walked off with \$1,000 prize and a laptop computer.

In July 2006, Cuapio was recognized by Governor Rell and DECD Commissioner James F. Abromaitis at the [Governor's Competitiveness Council](#) meeting. Governor Rell presented Cuapio with a proclamation, honoring him for his award-winning presentation at this year's BizPlan Competition.

Ivellisse Morales, from Regional Hill Career High School in New Haven, and **Nina To** from Hartford Public High School in Hartford received second and third place awards, respectively. Morales received \$750 and a laptop for her business "TransTalk", a Spanish translation service, and To received \$500 and a laptop for her business, "In-A-Flash-Photography", a service that takes photographs at school functions including dances and sporting events, and sells photograph keychain products.

The laptops awarded to the three finalists were presented by Matthew Nemerson, President and CEO of the Connecticut Technology Council, on behalf of the Connecticut IT/Software Cluster.

"NFTE is an excellent example of the types of programs that we should be providing to our students in the inner city to teach them the skills that they will need to be successful in both their education and careers," said Mary Ann Hanley, Governor's Policy Advisor on Workforce Development. "Critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills are essential to workers in the 21st century Knowledge

Economy and NFTE helps students to develop these skills in the context of a real world entrepreneurial challenge. I really enjoyed seeing the students present their work and participating as a judge for the BizPlan competition."

Every competitor was really a winner that day as top city finalists from Connecticut inner-city high schools presented their business plans to the esteemed panel of judges from government, business, and banking. The winners were chosen from among nine finalists at high schools in Hartford, New Haven, Middletown, New Britain, Norwalk, and Stamford.

In preparation for the competition, each student received 50 hours of entrepreneurial training in order to gain enough knowledge and skills to create and develop their own business.

Both Cuapio and Morales will be going on to compete in the national competition in New York City this October, for a chance to win the top prize of \$10,000.

Greetings!

It's Fall already, and it seems like just yesterday since we celebrated our 2006 BizPlan competition. I am really looking forward to working with our dedicated and creative team of educators, and having another successful year.

Our real work lies ahead during the next couple of months while our certified NFTE teachers are orienting students and previewing the possibilities they can achieve as budding entrepreneurs. We are planning a teacher's meeting in October, and, of course, I'll be looking forward to the first set of reports about our new student businesses for the 2006 and 2007 year. The creative ideas never cease to amaze me.

For these NFTE newsletters, since we really want to promote the sharing of ideas, we've created a new section called "NFTE's Nifty Ideas". It is a place to write in and share stories, plans, and ideas with one another. So keep those e-mails and letters coming. Tell us about the things you're doing, the experiments you're trying and the new things your students are teaching you. We want to make this newsletter a great planning resource.

If you are alumni of the program, we'd also love to hear from you! Let us know about your success!

We received wonderful feedback from our premier issue of the CT NFTE Newsletter, and hope that our readers find this one just as informative and interesting. As always, we'd love to hear from you with any ideas or comments.

We know this year will be another fantastic one, so get excited and get committed to NFTE!

Elaine Thomas Williams
Project Coordinator for NFTE CT



TEACHER PROFILE: Ann Nguyen Brings Real Life Business Lessons to the Classroom

If you ask Ann Nguyen what she likes best about the NFTE curriculum, she will reply without hesitation that it is because the program is “so real world and so hands-on, that it makes complete sense to the students.”

This year marks Mrs. Nguyen’s third year teaching the NFTE program. After teaching the curriculum at Hartford Public High School for two years, Mrs. Nguyen begins her first year this Fall at Sport and Medical Sciences Academy in Hartford, where she is, of course, teaching the NFTE curriculum as part of a Marketing class.

NFTE Teacher Anne Nguyen

Nguyen’s goal, as it is every year, is to bring real-life lessons into the classroom. She speaks with pride about a student she had her first year teaching the NFTE program who created a chocolate lollipop business that actually enabled the student to attend the prom. Her profits were sufficient enough that she was able to purchase the dress, shoes and tickets.

This, for Nguyen, is a testament to the success of this program.

“With NFTE, students learn how academia provides the tools to build a business, and, in turn, how the classroom workshop becomes the real world,” said Nguyen. “NFTE helps my students learn what it takes to become entrepreneurs – as well as what it means to be a better employee. By the time we’re finished, they understand the big picture.”

An energetic and committed teacher, Nguyen has truly dedicated herself to the program. This year, she will incorporate a lot of hands-on activities with her students, including working in cooperative groups, taking field trips to area businesses to meet with owners, and bringing area entrepreneurs into her classroom as guest speakers.

“The NFTE curriculum is the most meaningful accomplishment in my career,” adds Nguyen. “Not only is it good for my students, it’s fantastic for me as well. You get out of it what you put into to it.”

PARTNER PROFILE: New Haven Board of Education Is Taking Care of Business

If you are a student in the New Haven school district, chances are you’ve heard of - or are currently enrolled in – the NFTE program. That’s because the New Haven Board of Education (NHBOE) has proven itself to be a major cheerleader for the national entrepreneurship program.

Since 2004, the NHBOE has supported the NFTE program in several of New Haven’s schools including, Hill Regional High School, Metropolitan Business Academy, James Hillhouse, Wilbur Cross, New Haven Adult Education, Sound School and High School In The Community. More than 500 students have enrolled in the “School To Career Program” to learn and develop the tools they need to build their own small business.

With every new education program comes the issue of funding. Many districts are forced to pass over a wonderful opportunity for their students because of lean budgets. However, the NHBOE has found a solution to funding the “School To Career Program” with Perkins Act grants. The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act allows for public schools to acquire federal funding for programs

that teach and promote occupations that do not require an advanced degree. Perkins funds can be used for a variety of costs from hiring vocational staff to curriculum materials.

With funding from Perkins Act grants, NHBOE has been able to build its NFTE program into one of the best in Connecticut. Ten teachers in the New Haven school system are currently trained to teach entrepreneurship. Mary Ann O'Brien, School To Career Specialist and Alicia Caraballo, Principal at the New Haven Adult Education Center are true champions of the program. Because of their efforts, New Haven students have gained the vocational education needed for a successful entrepreneurship. Their hard work and dedication has truly made NFTE's program a success in New Haven.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? College Life is "Sweet" for Former NFTE Student

Former NFTE student Donette Smith has traded her daily business life temporarily for college life at the University of Hartford. Donette was a student at Hartford Public High School when she competed in NFTE's Connecticut BizPlan competition in 2005, placing third in the classroom competition. After taking the NFTE exam, Donette earned three college credits, as well.



"Sweets & More" founder Donette Smith

As head of her candy business, **"Sweets & More"**, she sold white chocolate candy for every holiday throughout the year in and around Hartford County.

"I have always wanted to go into business, but I wasn't sure what type of business," said Donette. "After the completion of the NFTE program with "Sweets & More" I decided that I wanted to [go into] business administration."

Now a freshman at the University of Hartford, Donette is majoring in business administration. The NFTE program helped Donette when making a decision about attending college, and more importantly, what to major in.

Donette is currently enrolled in a variety of courses at the University of Hartford, including Academic Strategies, and a business class called Effective Speech.

Although Donette has just started college and doesn't have as much spare time as she'd like to dedicate to her business, she plans on keeping "Sweets & More" running for a long time, as something to do in her spare time.

"NFTE meant a lot to me," she adds. "It gave me the opportunity to do something I never thought I would do."

~ Attention Alumni ~

If you are NFTE alumn, we'd love to hear from you!

WINNER'S CIRCLE: Congratulations to All of the Classroom BizPlan Winners from the Past Year!

Ashley Alling, Vinal Technical High School • **Matthew Buno**, Metropolitan Business Academy • **Kayla Burchard**, Vinal Technical High School • **Giovanni Cangiano**, High School in the Community • **Jose Cuapio**, Metropolitan Business Academy • **Shashawnee Cummings**, Vision Center • **Jahron Davis**, CCC Summer Biz Camp • **Cherice DeRoche**, James Hillhouse High School • **Josey Dytray**, CCC Summer Biz Camp • **Jahmel Fraser**, Hartford Public High School • **Christian Galarza**, Hartford Public High School • **Dominia Glenn**, James Hillhouse High School • **Raheem Grayson**, High School in the Community • **Jose Guaderrama**, James Hillhouse High School • **Kevin Hardy**, Hartford Public High School • **Asha Hargrove**, Hartford Public High School • **Anthony Harris**, High School in the Community • **Shontay Hoffman**, Vinal Technical High School • **Jeanine Howard**, Hartford Public High School • **Kenneth Huelsman**, High School in the Community • **Matt Humphrey**, Hill Regional High School • **Amrit Jutla**, New Britain High School • **Christopher Langley**, Metropolitan Business Academy • **Jessica Levene**, Vision Center • **Josh Magnotta**, Vinal Technical High School • **Jeter Me'chaical**, CCC Summer Biz Camp • **Jason Messenger**, New Britain High School • **Ivellisse Morales**, Hill Regional High School • **Ashley Platt**, Vinal Technical High School • **Jennifer Saavedra**, New Britain High School • **Cierra Stancil**, CCC Summer Biz Camp • **Nina To**, Hartford Public High School • **Alex Telford**, Metropolitan Business Academy • **Mechaila Vetten**, CCC Summer Biz Camp • **Javier Vigoa**, Hill Regional High School • **Ronald Waller**, Vision Center • **Chad Wooten**, Hill Regional High School



NFTE's NIFTY IDEAS

"All genuine learning is active, not passive. It involves the use of the mind, not just memory. It is the process of discovery, in which the student is the main agent, not the teacher." - Mortimer Adler

Stephanie Paris-Cooper, NFTE teacher

Looking to keep students engaged? Searching for ways to promote active learning and out-of-the-box thinking? **Stephanie Paris-Cooper** from **Hill Regional Career High School** in New Haven has some tips that might help!

Stephanie was recently selected to represent Connecticut at the NFTE Advanced Teacher Forum in New York City. The forum, which is designed to meet the professional development needs of NFTE's most experienced and innovative Certified Entrepreneurship Teachers (CETs), provides an opportunity to meet and share experiences and best practices with peer CETs from across the country and around the world.

At the event, Stephanie conducted a presentation on **Active Learning**. Active Learning, as Stephanie describes it, enables the student to be the principal driving force - and is given the opportunity to take on a more interactive relationship with the subject material. Regardless of the subject matter, when active learning is compared to traditional teaching methods, such as lecture, students learn more material, retain the information longer, and enjoy the class more.

"The goal of my presentation was to make it a point to get to know your students," says Paris-Cooper. "It is extremely important to make a connection to them in order to build a relationship so that they will want to work hard."

As part of her active learning techniques, Stephanie relies on several Web sites that she highly recommends and should be worked into lesson plans or to promote discussion and interactivity. Check them out!

- **Making It! Small Business Success Stories:** <http://www.makingitv.com/>
- **John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center:** www.iowajpec.org/k12program/resources/
- **The Times 100 UK:** <http://www.thetimes100.co.uk/>
- **Sample Business Plans:** <http://www.bplans.com/>
- **Mind Your Own Biz:** <http://www.mindyourownbiz.org/>
- **Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education:** <http://www.entre-ed.org/>

*Got a Nifty NFTE Idea? Let us Know! Email ideas to:
DECD.cluster.council@po.state.ct.us*

Getting the Goods on Goods

Wonder what motivates someone to buy a cell phone? A pair of jeans? Ever considered the differences in attitudes of buyers toward products? Twenty NFTE students from Hartford High School recently took a snapshot of their buying public as part of their planning strategy for building a business with a visit to Connecticut InFocus, a leading market research facility.

Mary Ann Pacocha, Director of Connecticut InFocus, and Steve Gaynes, vice president of public relations for Cashman + Katz, parent company of Connecticut InFocus, explained that marketing research is key to the success of any new business venture, and the information collected can guide the most important strategic business decisions.

As part of two mock research studies, two groups of students acted both as clients of a cell phone and jeans company as well as participants in the studies. Gaynes acted as the moderator and brought students into the discussion with a series of questions about each product. Lively discussions sent the message back to mock clients that these products create a lot of challenges for both buyers and sellers.

To add to the excitement and keep students on their toes, Pacocha videotaped the two groups of participants so that teachers would have a way of recapping the educational value of the visit.

The focus group experience allowed students to understand the importance of marketing a product, a key component in building their own businesses for the NFTE program. And if the lively conversation following the visit was any indication, this visit was a slam dunk for Hartford High's NFTE program.

***DECD and NFTE Would Like to
Thank the Judges from the 2006
BizPlan Competition for Their
Continuous Support:***



Judges at the 2006 BizPlan Competition

Ahmed Ashan, Horizon Staffing • Jody Becker, Hartford Public Schools • Rose Bednarz, Gateway Community College • Timothy Bergstrom, Webster Bank • Barbara Fernandez, Department of Economic and Community Development • Stanley Garstka, Yale University • Lucy Goicoechea-Hernandez, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission of CT • Mary Ann Hanley, Governor's Policy Advisor on Workforce Development • Averil Higgins, Maralex Trucking • Carlton Highsmith, Specialized Packaging Group • Jean Blake-Jackson, University of Hartford • John Lobon, Connecticut Development Authority • Mary Ann O'Brien, New Haven Public Schools • Thomas Phillips, Capital Workforce Partners • Anthony Price, Waterbury Development Corporation • Hector Torres, Connecticut Hispanic Yellow Pages • Tony March, Tony March Buick GMC • Fernando Rosa, Hartford Economic Development Commission

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **October 10:** Teacher's Meeting (location TBD)
 - **October 26:** NFTE National BizPlan Competition, New York City
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We Welcome Your Feedback!

Your comments or submissions to the NFTE CT Newsletter are welcome. Please contact NFTE at (860) 270-8235, or email us at: DECD.cluster.council@po.state.ct.us.

NFTE's mission is to teach entrepreneurship to young people from low-income communities to enhance their economic productivity by improving their business, academic and life skills.

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