

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO PITCH TO LOCAL INVESTORS**

*Young Entrepreneurs Seek Funding for Startups*

**Lubbock, Texas**— Student entrepreneurs will take the stage to present their business plans before a panel of local business leaders and a public audience on Thursday, April 5 at 5:30 p.m. at the Lubbock Scottish Rite, 1101 70<sup>th</sup> St. The students will be dressed as young professionals, and are ready to wow the crowd.

15 students in grades six through 12 representing 14 businesses and social movements from the Lubbock Chamber Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) will have six minutes to pitch their business plans to prominent local members of the business community, during the program's annual YEA! Investor Panel Event "Shark Tank" style. Based on the appeal and merit of the students' plans and presentations, representatives from ten companies will determine the amount of funds to allocate to each business or social movement.

The investors will also select one business to advance to the Young Entrepreneurs Academy Saunders Scholars Competition, where they will compete with students across the United States for college scholarships.

The Investor Panel will be comprised of prominent local business people, including:

- ✓ Joshua Allen, Founder/CEO of [Allen Financial Agency Inc.](#)
- ✓ Tim Collins, CEO of [Collins Stone](#)
- ✓ Casey Doyle, General Manager of [Casey Carpet One](#)
- ✓ Kimberly Gramm, Managing Director of the [Texas Tech Innovation Hub](#)
- ✓ Melissa Grimes, President of [Studio West](#)
- ✓ Jay Jacobus, CEO of [Scarborough Specialties](#)
- ✓ Jeff Lowry, COO of [Madera Companies](#)
- ✓ Brandon Mulkey, Owner/Operator of [Chick-fil-A](#)
- ✓ John Osborne, President/CEO of [Lubbock Economic Development Alliance](#)
- ✓ Justin Sharbutt, Owner of [Dunkin Donuts/Baskin Robbins](#)

The event is free and open to the public. Interviews with young entrepreneurs or members of the judging panel can be arranged ahead of time by contacting Haily Wells at (806) 761-7005. To learn more about the YEA! program visit [www.lubbockchamber.com/yea](http://www.lubbockchamber.com/yea).

### **The Young Entrepreneurs Academy**

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) is a 501(C) 3 offering groundbreaking year-long classes that teach middle and high school students how to start and run their own businesses. Throughout the class, students develop business ideas, write business plans, conduct market research, pitch their plans to a panel of investors for startup funds, and launch and run their own, fully formed companies and social movements. The project-based program empowers students to take charge of their futures.

Founded in 2004 at the University of Rochester with support from the Kauffman Foundation, YEA! today serves thousands of students nationwide. In 2011, the United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation became a national sponsor and partner of the Academy to help celebrate the spirit of enterprise among today's youth and tomorrow's future leaders.

YEA! bridges the business and educational communities to fulfill its mission of teaching more students how to make a job, not just take a job. YEA! is made possible by The Kauffman Foundation, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and the E. Philip Saunders Foundation. For more information, visit [yeausa.org](http://yeausa.org).

### **U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation**

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation is dedicated to strengthening America's long-term competitiveness and educating the public on how the free enterprise system improves society and the economy.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations.

### **Sam's Club**

Sam's Club®, a division of Walmart Stores, Inc. (NYSE: WMT), is a leading membership warehouse club offering savings and services to millions of members in 651 clubs in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Sam's Club offers affordable access to innovative services for families and small business owner, including travel, payroll and HR services, protection plans, legal solutions, cash rewards and more. To learn more about time and money with Sam's Club visit [www.SamsClub.com/services](http://www.SamsClub.com/services).

### **Lubbock Chamber of Commerce**

The Lubbock Chamber of Commerce represents more than 1,900 businesses and over 79,000 employees on the South Plains which accounts for over \$2 billion in annual household earnings in Lubbock and West Texas. Since 1913 the Chamber, as a catalyst for business growth; a convener of leaders and influencers; and a champion for a stronger community, has served as a unified voice of business by actively advocating for a pro-jobs, pro-growth, pro-business climate.

### **Texas Tech Innovation Hub**

The Texas Tech University Innovation Hub at Research Park (the Hub) opened in 2015 to assist in the formation of startup companies relevant to today's local, regional and global economy. Texas Tech is experimenting with new approaches to economic and sustainable development focusing on commercializing and translating research, creating and growing jobs and developing a complete entrepreneurial eco-system with its community, state, and federal partners. Intended as the first of a series of facilities, the Hub, a 40,000 square foot state of the art platinum LEED building equipped with office and wet laboratory facilities is home to robust programs to advance the impact of the region's economic development efforts. The Hub programs support faculty, students, and local entrepreneurs in early and growth stage companies.