

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 14, 2018

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**LOCAL BUSINESS MENTORS AND SPONSORS**  
**STEP-UP FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS**  
*Volunteers Help YEA! Students in Business Planning Process*

**Lubbock, Texas**— The Lubbock Chamber Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) an innovative program that guides students through the process of starting their own, real business, is excited to announce local business mentors and sponsors for this year's YEA! program.

Once the students identify their business idea, YEA! Lubbock pairs each student business with an appropriate mentor. This industry expert helps the students to fine tune their concept, write a business plan and identify their target audience. This year's mentors range from law firms to non-profits and includes:

**Ashton Jones | Ramar Communications**  
**Brian Palomino | Happy State Bank**  
**Calvin Davis | Small Business Administration**  
**Cory Myres | Lubbock Consulting**  
**Dan Baze | Dan Baze Agency**  
**Felicia Estrada | Keller Williams - Rex Andrews Group**  
**Garrett Coutts | McCleskey, Harriger, Brazill & Graf, LLP**  
**Gus Khan | Vista College**  
**Jack French | MeBulbs**  
**Jason Lowrance | Sanford & Tatum Insurance Agency**  
**Matt Jock | Small Business Administration**  
**Melanie Cornwell | MLC Resources**  
**Melissa Grimes | Studio West**  
**Meredith & Allison Linker | Merle Norman Cosmetics**  
**Monica Tracy | Communities in Schools**  
**Russell Shrauner | The Carlson Law Firm**  
**Tawny Westbrook | Alpha Media USA**  
**Valorie Duvall | TTU Dept. Sociology, Anthropology & Social Work**

As a non-profit organization, YEA! relies on the generosity of the community and of sponsors; people who identify with entrepreneurship and want to help pave the way for future entrepreneurs. Some help the student businesses get off the ground while others provide in-kind support or volunteer their time and services.

The YEA! Lubbock program is presented by [Lubbock Economic Development Alliance](#) (LEDA) and supported by numerous businesses in the Lubbock community.

“The YEA! program is a successful training of young CEOs which contributes to the ecosystem of entrepreneurship in Lubbock,” said John Osborne, President and CEO of the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance. “LEDA is proud to be an avid supporter of the Chamber’s efforts to grow business and train our future business owners as this aligns with LEDA’s goals and objectives.”

During the course of the 30-week program, more than 80 local businesses become involved with YEA! at various levels. From helping teach the basics of business to inviting students to tour their companies, volunteers participate in a variety of capacities. Students work in close cooperation with local business leaders, community leaders and educators who use their personal experiences to demonstrate how to develop ideas and objectives, pitch potential investors, obtain funding, register with governmental agencies, establish e-commerce and a web presence, and more. By the end of the class, students own and operate fully-formed and functioning businesses, which they can carry on after their graduation from the program.

To learn more visit [www.LubbockChamber.com/YEA](http://www.LubbockChamber.com/YEA) or contact program liaison Amy Marquez at [Amy.Marquez@lubbockbiz.org](mailto:Amy.Marquez@lubbockbiz.org).

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### **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 almost 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.