

Area Teens Learn About Entrepreneurship

The Northeast Kansas Entrepreneurship Academy was held June 16 through 19 on the campus of Highland Community College. The Academy provides high school students with an opportunity to learn best practices for starting and managing a business.

“Students learn to prepare a business plan, enjoy expert guest speakers and are taken on field trips to interact with successful business owners. One new highlight this year included the opportunity to attend presentations at the Kauffman Foundation for Entrepreneurship” stated Northeast Kansas Enterprise Facilitator Teresa McAnerney. “Northeast Kansas Enterprise Facilitation continues to support and organize the Academy because it offers students interested in entrepreneurship an opportunity to further develop their business skills and network with like-minded peers.” The Doniphan County Chamber of Commerce, Highland Community College, Northeast Kansas Rural Business Development along with Glacial Hills RC&D continue to be major sponsors of the program.

High school students who have completed the ninth grade in Northeast Kansas are eligible to attend. This year’s students include: Bailey Gronniger, James Edelman, Cateria Ebeling, Emily Cairo, Daryann Small, Stephen Akers, Justin Donaldson and Brandon Johnston. The students represented six counties.

Loren Ziegler, business teacher from Silver Lake High School returned as the Academy director for the fourth year. “We are fortunate to have someone with Loren’s experience and enthusiasm,” reported Penny Donaldson of Highland Community College and Academy organizer. “His leadership and strong curriculum provides an empowering learning experience for teens.” In addition to Ziegler’s business curriculum for the Academy, guest speakers and tours included: Nate Olson founder of One Million Cups at the Kauffman Foundation for Entrepreneurship, Mary Ann Riederer, Kansas Small Business Development Center on business etiquette; Caleb Asher of Sprout Communications on marketing, Brett Huskamp owner of Willow Brook, The Snowball and Pepper Mill in Atchison, Derek Franklin owner of The Hardware Store and the Atchison Auto Parts Napa in Atchison, Louise Regenstein, owner of United Country in Atchison, Christy Isaacs, owner Shelter Insurance and Country Memories Soaps in Atchison, Andrea Winter and Ashley Tuttle owners of Giggle Girls Cakery in Hiawatha, Stacy Simmer and Mike Twombly of Rainbow NEK and Communications in Hiawatha invited students to tape a TV commercial for their business and Troy Boswell of Hiawatha National Bank hosted them for an informative presentation on what banks expect from business accounts and how to better qualify for financing.

“We offer an impressive line-up of speakers, tours and activities for these students,” says David Key, Director of the Kansas State Meadowlark Extension District and Academy organizer. “This year was the best yet. The Highland Community College’s Klinefelter Farm invited the students to their ropes and challenge course where they participated in leadership and teambuilding exercises, this is a unique experience for these teens” added Key.

“The Northeast Kansas Entrepreneurship academy is a great asset to high school students with business or entrepreneurial interest,” said Louise Regenstein of Atchison. “I would recommend that any high school student participate in this educational program.”

The last night of the academy, winners of the business plan competition were announced and received their Academy certificates at an awards banquet. Students were awarded cash prizes totaling over one thousand dollars. Judges for the business plan competition were: Mary Ann Riederer of the Washburn Small Business Development Center, Joyce Simpson educator and owner of Simpson Grocery in Wathena, KS, and Trudy Rice, Community Development Specialist with Kansas State University.

The planning committee is already looking forward to next year’s Academy. If you are interested in being a sponsor or know a teen who may be interested, contact Teresa McAnerney at 785-364-0583 or e-mail tm@nekef.org for more information. Attendance is open to high school students with an interest in entrepreneurship or community leadership living in Atchison, Brown, Doniphan, Jackson, Jefferson, Marshall, Nemaha, Osage, and rural Shawnee County. Visit www.efbizcamp for more information.

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