

HEART OF STARK

\$25,000 given out in ‘Stark Tank’ competition

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In partnership with The Repository, every Monday, Stark Community Foundation highlights positive happenings in our community. Here's to Good News Mondays!

In collaboration with Stark Education Partnership, local business leaders recently awarded \$25,000 to college students participating in Stark Tank – the community’s version of the popular TV show "Shark Tank" – where students pitch their business ideas to a panel of judges, aka “sharks.”

Stark Tank is coordinated by Stark Education Partnership with support from Junior Achievement and Strengthening Stark, and the competition is made possible through the generous support of local entrepreneurs and business leaders who provide funding and serve as the sharks for the finals.

The event is open to students attending Aultman College, Kent State University at Stark, Malone University, Stark State College, University of Akron, University of Mount Union and Walsh University. This year marked the fifth year of the college-level competition, and there was a record number of students who entered for a chance to pitch.

There are nine sharks who take turns judging the competitions, and three of them were part of this year’s college pitch: Mark Fedor, CEO of Morgan Engineering; Sue Grabowski, CEO of Desidara; and Charles Mullen, CEO of Apple Growth Partners. This year’s college competition was emceed by Kenny Roda, an award-winning talk show host currently co-hosting WHBC’s Kenny & JT show.

The winning pitch of this year’s Stark Tank competition was present-

ed by University of Mount Union student Garrett O’Connell, who won \$13,000 for his product H.O.N.K (Hear Our Noise Kit). The device notifies you when your car alarm is going off – ending the question about whether the alarm you are hearing is your vehicle or not. Each kit comes with a keychain and easy-to-install equipment that plugs directly into the fuse box of your automobile, eliminating the need for professional installation.

Charlene Perry from Walsh University won \$8,000 as the second place winner with her pitch for Spic-E, a showering bodysuit product that utilizes ultraviolet light and infrared heat to kill germs and eliminate odors to revolutionize personal hygiene for medical patients. Steven Hennis and Daniel Ogbonna from Malone University placed third and won \$4,000 for their pitch for PerformEx, a tech-based sports company that provides a database for communication between coaches and athletes.

Stark Tank aligns with Stark Education Partnership’s strategic plan for talent development and growing the next generation of business leaders by fostering entrepreneurship. The organization engages and collaborates with education, business, civic and community stakeholders to drive sustainable improvement and innovation to provide all students with education and career success.

Learn more about Stark Education Partnership’s other initiatives at www.edpartner.org.

Stark Community Foundation helps individuals, families, businesses and nonprofits achieve their philanthropic goals through a variety of charitable funds and strategic initiatives. Ranked in the top 10% of community foundations in the country, the foundation and its family of donors have granted more than \$250 million to nonprofits since 1963. Learn more at www.starkcf.org.