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Nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit

Lemonade Day program teaches students how to start their own business

Operating a lemonade stand is, for many Americans, the earliest introduction to business. Lemonade Day is a national experiential education program that builds on that tradition by incorporating lessons on goal setting, budgeting, borrowing and repaying start up funds, and calculating profit. Add in estimating quantity, counting change, cooperating in a team, and presenting a business case to an investor, and you have a rich experience that meets academic requirements in several subjects, combined with a real-life business experience.

In the Solon schools, The Young Innovator's Society added a STEM component by incorporating design and fabrication of stands in a partnership with CWRU's fabrication lab. Middle school aged participants gathered requirements from their younger counterparts and then developed the stands, which were rolled out at a baseball tournament at Solon Community Park. Solon Mayor, Susan Drucker, was a champion for the program, performing a ribbon cutting ceremony and welcoming the young entrepreneurs to a city council meeting following the event for a "teach back."



Michael Otterman is now an eighth grader in Solon who has continued to pursue entrepreneurial ideas with a STEM focus. "I am currently proving out a method to remove toxins from fish in the natural environment. We are implementing it in our first stream location in March on a US government site." His brother Stephen, who also participated in Lemonade Day has pursued numerous other market opportunities, selling 3D smiley face charms he created in the Fab Lab and bracelets he made by hand. "I like going around and telling people about our stand," says Stephen.

At University School, Lemonade Day is an after school club for elementary students and in the middle school, boys can choose eClub in entrepreneurship. In this club, the boys start a microbusiness and the club culminates with an evening marketplace after a major speaker event at the school, The Celebration of Youth Entrepreneurship in April.

Michael Faeges ran Lucky Lemons with his friends Lleyton Dahm and Abraham Paik. Lucky Lemons operated at Ursuline College one afternoon during exam week. The boys donated a portion of their profits to the college to help reconstruction efforts after a tornado destroyed the school's gym. A sixth grader now, Michael is excited to start eClub this month. Another club participant, Cameron Phillips reported "being a part of the Lemonade Day program really showed me the hard work that goes into being an entrepreneur. It also helped me to sharpen my problem solving and management skills." Cameron and his little brother operated Legacy Lemonade at Giant Eagle, attracting customers by playing music on their violin and cello.

Another musical duo, two Shaker students applied their Lemonade Day lessons this year to start a mobile hot chocolate business in their neighborhood. Nick Voysey, and his friend Thomas, from Shaker's Onaway Elementary featured James Bond theme music they played on trumpet and saxophone when they sold lemonade at the corner of Shaker and Cortland in June. Now in sixth grade, the boys started Paint Cap Refreshments. "Their busy schedules and a freezing cold and snowy winter hindered their efforts (and profits) but it was a direct result of Lemonade Day," said Mrs. Voysey.

Lemonade Day is a national, experiential education program that teaches children about starting and operating a business through the example of a lemonade stand. Started in Houston, TX in 2007, Lemonade Day was brought to Northeast Ohio in 2011 by The Burton D. Morgan Foundation and University School's Young Entrepreneur Institute. Additional funding is provided by the KeyBank Foundation and the Knight Foundation. There is no cost to participate in Lemonade Day, due to the generosity of our funding partners.

"Lemonade Day is a great way to get young kids excited about entrepreneurship," said University School's Jessie Jones, Regional Director of Lemonade Day Northeast Ohio. "These are valuable life lessons no matter what your career." The program is taught in the classroom and afterschool through partnerships with over 40 schools and organizations. In 2015 it is projected to reach 2,500 students in five counties across northeast Ohio. Partners include large and small public, private

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and parochial schools, and organizations such as Girl Scouts, Junior Achievement, and Cuyahoga County Public Library.

New for this year, families can sign up by registering online through Facebook or at lemonadedayneo.org/registration. The free materials will be available at several pick-up locations, and young entrepreneurs who submit business results after completing the program are eligible to win prizes.

For more information email info@lemonadedayneo.org, or visit them on Facebook.



[Back to Previous Page](#)

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