

Young entrepreneurs get face-to-face pitch with 'Shark Tank' Daymond John at Hunting Valley's University School



Area high school students who had the opportunity to present their entrepreneurial ideas to 'Shark Tank's' Daymond John on Saturday during Enspire 2015 at University School were, from left, Javon Miller, of Maple Heights; North Canton's Brianna Roemmele; Anish Ganesh, of Twinsburg; Danny Andreini, of Shaker Heights; and Broadview Heights' Matt Gnatowski. (Jeff Piorkowski/Special to Sun News)



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Email the author

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HUNTING VALLEY, Ohio -- The auditorium at University School was filled Saturday afternoon with people who like to, or want to, make things happen.

Saturday represented the second day of **Enspire 2015** [<http://www.youngentrepreneurinstitute.org/young-entrepreneur-institute-programs/enspire-2015/>], an event designed to educate entrepreneur educators, and to inspire young people interested in entrepreneurship.

The keynote speaker of the two-day event was **Daymond John** [<http://daymondjohn.com/>], founder of the hip hop clothing business giant **FUBU** [<http://www.fubu.com/>], and a regular on ABC TV's "Shark Tank." Those who watch the show know "**Shark Tank**" [<http://abc.go.com/shows/shark-tank>] is about would-be entrepreneurs pitching their money-making ideas to a panel of successful entrepreneurs, hoping to gain investment dollars.

"Life is a series of pitches," John told the audience, "and you're always pitching."

Indeed, as part of Enspire 2015, five local high school students took part in **Teen Tech Tank**, [<http://www.youngentrepreneurinstitute.org/young-entrepreneur-institute-programs/teen-tech-tank-2015/>] during which they had the opportunity to pitch their inventions and money-making ideas to John.

"I've given a lot of pitches, but he was definitely the most famous person I've made a pitch to, and that was the biggest audience I've had," said one of the five high schoolers, Shaker Heights resident and University School senior Danny Andreini.

Andreini and his fellow young entrepreneurs each showed a short video introducing their product, then had two minutes to sit on stage with John and answer the Shark's questions.

"It was a little nerve-wracking," Andreini said of his time on stage with John. Andreini didn't show any nerves, however, as he has made several pitches of the product he is selling, Vamonos!

Andreini came up with the idea along with fellow Shaker Heights resident and University School senior Marc Frankel, and Jacob Fakult, now a college student at **Worcester Polytechnic Institute** [<https://www.wpi.edu/>].

Vamonos! is a smart phone app still in the launch stage that allows one to create text messages in advance so they are not written while driving.

"Basically, the idea started when I was picking up Danny one day and, when I got there, I said, 'I'm here, and I'm hungry,' but I had to wait five minutes for him," said Frankel, who serves as the enterprise's CEO.

Andreini, is Vamonos!'s Chief Design Officer, and Fakult, Chief Technical Officer. The trio won a \$10,000 prize last year for a pitch they did in Columbus at the Believe in Ohio entrepreneur fair, which allowed them to start up their business.

"We worked last summer, 9-5 (p.m.) on (Vamonos!)," Frankel said. "So that gave us experience in starting a business."

Frankel said he would have liked to have been on stage with Andreini speaking with John, but said he knew the pitch was in capable hands with his partner.

Andreini and Frankel invite anyone wishing to learn more about Vamonos! to visit **vamonosapp.io** [<http://vamonosapp.io/>].

The five high school presenters were chosen by voters who visited a **website** [<http://www.youngentrepreneurinstitute.org/young-entrepreneur-institute-programs/teen-tech-tank-2015/>] in advance of Enspire and selected their favorite from among about 30 video presentations. Area high schools all put out the word to interested students about how to submit a video.

The other high school finalists were Anish Ganesh, of Twinsburg; Matt Gnatowski, of Broadview Heights; Javon Miller, of Maple Heights; and Brianna Roemmele, of North Canton.

Gnatowski pitched an idea for Bit4Bit, citing the fact that half the world's population does not own a computer. His idea, a marketing campaign, would seek to allow people all over the world to own a computer.

John was impressed by Gnatowski's desire to help others. In his address, John spoke of how rap star LL Cool J helped FUBU get its start in the late 1980s, and of the importance of giving back by helping the community and world.

Teen Tech Tank was not designed to produce a winner from among the five who presented, but rather to give the opportunity to pitch to, and gain advice from John, whose businesses have produced more than \$6 billion in sales.

Enspire, whose main sponsor was the Burton D. Morgan Foundation, featured other speakers and workshops, as well as the sale of merchandise made by area teen entrepreneurs.

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