

North Union Young Entrepreneurs Take Creativity Beyond the Classroom

by Hannah Stein

It starts with a basic business venture, like a lemonade stand, that can ignite the fire and passion for entrepreneurship in children. Take that tiny lemonade stand and give it adult support, educational influence and a potential customer base of well over a thousand people, and you have the North Union young entrepreneurs.

Open to middle and high school youth from all over Northeast Ohio, the Young Entrepreneur Market offers a unique opportunity for students to explore their passions and sell their goods at the Shaker Square North Union Farmer's Market. While students are responsible for supplying their own product, the Market supplies chairs, tables, tents, and the labor for setup and tear-down. Thus far, students have found success in a number of different ventures including crafting jewelry, homemade granola and fashion accessories.

The Young Entrepreneur Market is a program with two main goals: teach entrepreneurship and get students excited about owning their

own business. Greg Malkin, founder of the Entrepreneur Institute at University School, believes that there are numerous invaluable skills to be gained through entrepreneurship at a young age.

"First, there's life skills: math skills, responsibility, talking to adults, and social interaction on an adult level," said Malkin. While the entrepreneurs are talking about, selling and promoting their product, they are gaining self confidence through dealing with adults.

"Some kids start behind the table, and by the end of the morning they're standing out front making a pitch."

"Being able to sell at Shaker Square in April was amazing," says a student entrepreneur from Beaumont High School. "We finally felt like our business plan on paper was turning into a reality. It was the first time that we were selling our product outside of school and we loved being able to directly interact with people and see their reactions to our products."

While the practical skills learned are vital to the success of the students' businesses and to other



areas of their maturity, Malkin also sees a broader impact that this program can have on Cleveland's future.

"Many of our young people go away to school and never come back," Malkin remarked. "We want them to see... this is a vibrant business community, and you can have a successful business in Northeast Ohio."

Growth can happen in regards to the student's business and profits, but most important is the growth that happens internally in a child's life. The Young Entrepreneur Market is giving the youth of Northeast Ohio the chance to embrace an idea and make it their own.

"We want our children to take ownership of their lives – emotionally, financially, and mentally," says Malkin. "You can talk until you're blue in the face about taking control of your life, but until you experience it, you won't learn how to do it."

Look for the Young Entrepreneur Market logo on the North Union Farmer's Market booth and participants' t-shirts. A competition was held for students to create the logo for the Market and develop their design and marketing skills.

The Young Entrepreneur Market will resume in September. It is open to any middle school or high school student applying through school or organization. The Young Entrepreneur Market is made possible through the generous support of The Burton D. Morgan Foundation and the Veale Foundation.

For more information, application and schedule, please visit youngentrepreneurmarket.org.

Students from various middle and high schools throughout Northeast Ohio may participate in Young Entrepreneur Market and sell their goods at the North Union Farmers Market.

