



For Immediate Release

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Local Student Entrepreneurs Succeed at Dow Championship

Midland, MI - Five teams of young entrepreneurs served up success in the Fore Our Future partnership with Junior Achievement of North Central Michigan (JA) and the Dow Championship this summer.

Over four days, during the PGA tournament in Midland, high school entrepreneurs braved the summer heat, rose to the challenge, and delivered their products to market with creativity, adaptability, and business savvy. These students earned the opportunity after competing in a rigorous pitch competition in May, where they presented their business ideas to a panel of local judges. The winning concepts included cheesecake and chicken kabobs, flavored lemonades, shaved ice, ice cream sundaes, pulled pork sliders, and sweet iced tea.

Each day featured a different student-led team, and everyone brought a unique approach to sales, marketing, and customer service. From initial concept to product development, budgeting, supply chain coordination, and customer interaction, students managed every aspect of their startups. Generous support from Ally Financial made this real-world business experience possible.

“The Fore Our Future program gives students a hands-on opportunity to express their creativity, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving ability,” said Chelsie Barber, JA District Director and Student Event Coordinator. “The students excelled each day and received an overwhelmingly positive response from the community.”

The five teams included:

Sunny Sips – Owner, Alaina Weyrowske, high school sophomore

Vera’s Sweet Iced Tea – Owner, Vera Roberson, high school sophomore

Par n Pair – Owners, Hannah Goethe, high school junior, and Joelle English, high school sophomore

Sundaes for Days – Owners, Jilian Remacle, Kate Macfarlane, Emilia Garces, high school freshman

Tiki Tee Time – Owners, Brooklen Gillis, Leyton Minuth, Logan Flint, high school seniors

This program is as close to real-world business ownership as it gets. These new business owners hired and trained employees, created a budget, worked through logistical needs, created marketing strategies, adapted to weather conditions, handled sales, and put their problem-solving skills to the test. For some, the entrepreneurial journey did not stop there: Alaina Weyrowske, expanded Sunny Sips by taking her business to the Gladwin Summer Street Festival in mid-July.

“The Fore Our Future program is the essence of what JA is all about – helping students create a path for success through financial literacy and helping them discover their own entrepreneurial power. This is exactly the kind of real-world learning experience that prepares students for life beyond high school,” said Kristy LeVasseur, President and CEO of JA North Central Michigan. “The professionalism and energy these students brought both to the pitch competition and the tournament was incredibly inspiring.”

Each team left the experience with more than just earnings—they gained confidence, practical skills, and a firsthand understanding of what it takes to run a successful business.

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Junior Achievement is the world's largest organization dedicated to educating K-12 students about workforce readiness, how business works and financial literacy through experiential, hands-on programs. These programs help prepare young people for the real world by showing them how to manage their money, create jobs that will make their communities more robust and apply entrepreneurial thinking to the workplace. Junior Achievement collaborates with the education and business communities to help students make the important connections between what they learn in school and experience in real life after graduation. For more information about Junior Achievement, visit our website at <https://northcentralmichigan.ja.org>.