



BUENA VISTA, CLAY, DICKINSON & EMMET COUNTIES

Fourth annual Be Your Own Boss seminar held

Over 100 students learned about entrepreneurship

OKOBOJI – The Iowa Lakes Corridor recently held its fourth annual Be Your Own Boss seminar for high school students. Nearly 120 students from seven schools attended and learned about entrepreneurship from entrepreneurs. Schools attending were Spirit Lake, Spencer, Clay Central Everly, Harris Lake Park, Storm Lake, Sioux Central and Graettinger-Terril.

“The Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation has a goal to become recognized as the most attractive region in Iowa for new ventures and entrepreneurs,” said Holly Pearson, Economic Development Coordinator at the Corridor. “Therefore, the Corridor is focusing on youth entrepreneurship, as a grassroots level, to develop the next generation of successful entrepreneurs and leaders in our region. The Be Your Own Boss seminar is one of our youth entrepreneur programs geared to expose the students to entrepreneurship as a viable career option.”



Holly Pearson, Economic Development Coordinator for the Corridor, welcomed students to the seminar.

During the seminar, four break-out sessions were held. The students were broken up into smaller groups and attended each of the sessions. They were led by young entrepreneurs and those who assist entrepreneurs. The speakers were Tyler Finchum, a senior at Muscatine High School who started the business Farm Manuals Fast; John Slump and Jared Garfield, Okoboji Entrepreneurial Institute Alumni and co-founders of Corvida Medical; Kevin Robinson, CEO of CTJ Enterprises and President of Common Cents Coaching; Anissa Jepsen, County Youth Coordinator for Clay County Iowa State Extension office. A special break-out session was held for the teachers. Dennis McDonald of Spirit Lake spoke to them about entrepreneurship in the classroom and his involvement in the Little Sioux Cooperative Growers.



Tyler Finchum, a senior at Muscatine High School, talked to the students about starting his business Farm Manuals Fast. In one year, he has made over 800 sales, and had sales in 15 countries. His earnings should pay for his college education.

Finchum, Slump and Garfield talked to the students about how they started their businesses. All three speakers talked about having a passion for their businesses. They didn't start their businesses to make money; they started them because they saw a need, created a solution, and have passion for what they are doing. Robinson taught the students about networking, and Jepsen taught team building skills.

The keynote speaker was Talia Leman, a 16-year-old from Waukee, Iowa. She is the CEO and founder of RandomKid, a non-profit organization that leverages the power of youth to solve real problems. Six years ago, Leman was watching the coverage of

Hurricane Katrina and decided she wanted to help. She rallied her friends to go trick-or-treating for spare change rather than candy. The Today Show found Leman's website and featured her on the show. She was able to reach out to youth across the country. Together, the youth raised over \$10 million for Katrina victims.

Jessica Sandy, a sophomore at Spirit Lake said, "When I get older I know I want to be a child psychologist, but I don't know if I want my own business, go in someone else's, or work for the school. I know now I want to have my own business!"

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The Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation is the regional economic development agency for Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson and Emmet counties. Its mission is to foster, encourage, aid, promote or otherwise assist in the economic growth and development of the region. For more information about the Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation, call 712-264-3474 or visit www.lakescorridor.com.