



Event Highlights

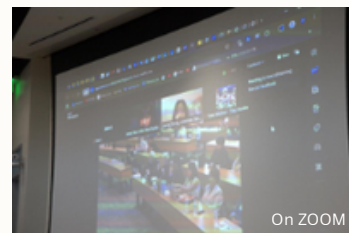


Celebrating our 2026 Winning Middle School and High School Business Teams

In a celebration of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship, 43 middle and high school business teams competed in Project ECHO's 2026 Teen Entrepreneurs' Business Plan Competition at California State University, Dominguez Hills. It was exciting to host 15 teams from other states that joined virtually via Zoom.

High School teams competed across our Products, Services, and Social Enterprise categories, while Middle School teams competed in their own dedicated division. At the end of the day, 13 High School teams and three Middle School teams earned top honors. 16 scholarships totaling \$8,500 were awarded to the winning teams. We applaud every young entrepreneur, whether or not they won, who worked hard to develop a business concept and confidently pitch their start-up to a panel of professional judges.

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

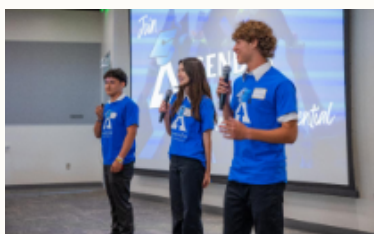
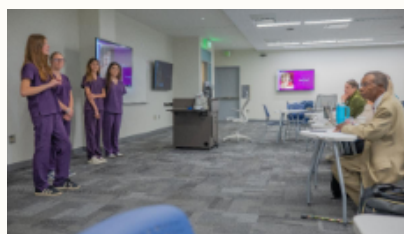


Helping Teens Stand Out in a Competitive College Landscape

When strong grades and traditional extracurriculars are increasingly common, meaningful experiences can help students stand out.

Through Project ECHO, students go beyond learning about entrepreneurship, they do it. Students develop a business concept, work as a team, create a business plan, and prepare to pitch their start-up, building leadership, problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and public-speaking skills along the way.

The experience culminates in the Teen Entrepreneurs' Business Plan Competition, where students present to executive-level judges and field questions about their ideas, strategies, and business plans—in person or virtually via Zoom. Students leave with more than another extracurricular. They gain a real accomplishment and personal story to draw upon in college applications, essays, interviews, and résumés demonstrating initiative, creativity, collaboration, and the confidence to turn an idea into action.



PROJECT ECHO'S 2026 BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

A NATIONAL COMMUNITY OF YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

Teams from across the country joined Project ECHO's 2026 Business Plan Competition, bringing together young entrepreneurs in person and virtually from coast to coast.

A GROWING NATIONAL REACH

 **43** TOTAL TEAMS
competed in 2026

 **15** TEAMS
participated virtually via Zoom

TEAMS REPRESENTED

- CALIFORNIA
- NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
- MASSACHUSETTS
- NEW JERSEY
- WASHINGTON



OUR JUDGES: A NATIONAL NETWORK

 **25** IN-PERSON
PITCH JUDGES
evaluated live
presentations at

 **75** REMOTE JUDGES
read business plans
from 24 different
states

OUR WINNING TEAMS

 **16** TOTAL WINNING TEAMS
6 OF 16 WINNING TEAMS
COMPETED VIRTUALLY

 **3** MIDDLE SCHOOL
TEAMS

 **13** HIGH SCHOOL
TEAMS

MAKING AN IMPACT

 **16** SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARDED
TOTALING **\$8,500**

“Recognizing the growth of Project ECHO's entrepreneurship programs beyond our Southern California roots has been an amazing accomplishment.”

— Diane Quast
Executive Director

POWERED BY PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY

 CSUDH students serving as Room Managers helped facilitate both the in-person pitches, the Zoom presentations, and supported the judges—creating an **engaging competition** experience for both our remote teams and volunteer judges.

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES. BUILDING FUTURES.

 Project ECHO's expanding reach connects young entrepreneurs with **meaningful opportunities**, **professional feedback**, and a **national community** of students developing the skills to turn their ideas into action.



ONE MISSION.
ONE COMMUNITY. ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES.

From in-person pitches to virtual presentations, Project ECHO continues to inspire and empower the next generation of business leaders—no matter where they're located.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Gene Eidelman
CEO and Co-Founder
Azure Printed Homes

Inspiring the Next Generation of Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs

Project ECHO was honored to welcome Gene Eidelman, CEO and Co-Founder of Azure Printed Homes, as the keynote speaker for our 2026 Business Plan Competition. A successful entrepreneur and innovator, Gene shared his experiences building and growing businesses while showing students how Azure Printed Homes is rethinking traditional construction through robotic 3D printing and recycled plastic materials.

The company's mission to make housing more sustainable, affordable, and efficient offered a powerful example of entrepreneurship and innovation in action. His message encouraged our young entrepreneurs to think boldly, embrace innovation, and continue pursuing their ideas long after competition day.



Now Registering for the 2026-2027 School Year!

Bring Project ECHO to Your Students

Give your students an experience that sets them apart. Offer Project ECHO's UC-approved entrepreneurship program, make the Teen Entrepreneurs' Business Plan Competition your capstone event, or launch an entrepreneurship club at your school.

Complete an Inquiry Form and Let's Get Started!

 **Thank You to our Volunteers!**



Partnerships are at the heart of Project ECHO's success. A heartfelt thank you to Joseph Wen, PhD, Dean (ret.), and Professor Michael Grimshaw from CSU, Dominguez Hills for welcoming our young entrepreneurs and providing the space to bring our 2026 Business Plan Competition to life.



We are equally grateful to our judges, CSUDH students who served as room managers, and volunteers who generously shared their expertise and encouragement. From 75 remote judges who read and assessed business plans to 25 in-person judges who evaluated student pitches and supported teams throughout competition day, your involvement created an invaluable real-world experience for our students.



Thank you for investing in our entrepreneurs. We hope you'll join us again next year.

Sign Up to Volunteer Today





Meet the teams, judges, and people who made the competition possible!

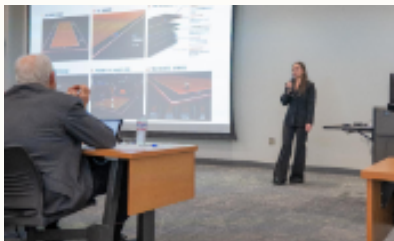
Check Out the Program!

TEEN ENTREPRENEURS' Business Plan Competition
 Project **ECHO** 2026

Hosted by
CSUDH COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
 ADMINISTRATION & PUBLIC POLICY

Sponsored by
HONDA

2025 Overall Winner
 Chloe Dalmacio
 CauseConnect



ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD

Program alumni (high school & college students and graduates) are invited to join the Alumni Advisory Board. Join us and help shape future programs, build your leadership skills, and expand your professional networks.

Learn More & Apply

WINNING TEAMS!

OVERALL WINNER!

Services Category

Service-based companies offer expertise and assistance

Congratulations to Team Finity from Redondo Union High School for achieving Overall Winner! Finity received the highest score for their pitch and plan.

2026 BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION WINNERS!

1st

FINITY
James Yu | Darren Kim | Ethan Ha | Nathan Nguyen

OVERALL WINNER & FIRST PLACE SERVICES

2026 BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION WINNERS!

2nd

ASCENDIA
Marlene Schott | Andrew Navarro | Gabriel Machado

SECOND PLACE SERVICES

2026 BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION WINNERS!

3rd

SKILL SURFER
Kirati Bollineni | Lara Leon

(TIED) THIRD PLACE SERVICES

2026 BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION WINNERS!

3rd

FRAUD PATROL
Maxwell Liu | Patrick Yang | Ethan Lu | Peter Li

(TIED) THIRD PLACE SERVICES

Social Enterprise Category

Social Enterprise includes nonprofits, hospitality, food and entertainment businesses, and companies that donate more than 25% of their net profits to social causes.



Did You Know?

Each student business team submits a written business plan that is independently evaluated by three judges. The written plan accounts for 55% of the team's overall score, with the remaining score determined by their live pitch. The teams with the highest combined scores are named the competition winners and awarded bragging rights, medals and scholarships.

Products Category

Product-based companies sell physical merchandise, apparel, and other material goods.

2026 BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION WINNERS!

1st

VIBELINE
ONE THOUSAND
\$1,000.00
Date: May 31st, 2026
Pay to the order of: Vibeline
For: First Place Products
Diana Quast
Signature: [Signature]

Uly Bane (CEO) | Tyler Scott (COO) | Jacob Nguyen (CFO/COO) | Will Poudock (CMO)

FIRST PLACE PRODUCTS

2026 BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION WINNERS!

2nd

CREAM & CARBON
Five Hundred
\$500.00
Date: May 31st, 2026
Pay to the order of: Cream & Carbon
For: 2nd Place
Diana Quast
Signature: [Signature]

Ronay Sharma | Cruz De La Torre | Savanna Makinen

SECOND PLACE PRODUCTS

2026 BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION WINNERS!

3rd

BLISS ENERGY
Two Hundred Fifty
\$250.00
Date: May 31st, 2026
Pay to the order of: Bliss Energy
For: (Tied) Third Place
Diana Quast
Signature: [Signature]

Christiana Gerstner | Lina Salazar | Isabella Storey
Palge Thomas-Graham | Ju Hyung | Lee DiLeva

(TIED) THIRD PLACE PRODUCTS

2026 BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION WINNERS!

3rd

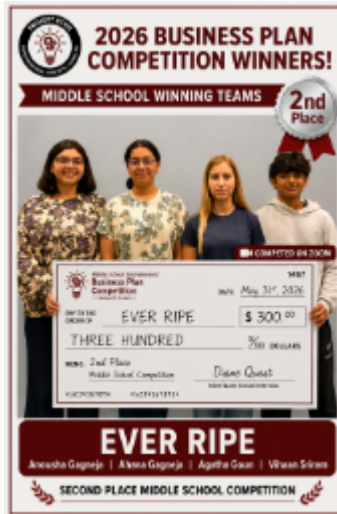
SPRINKLE SHIELD
Two Hundred Fifty
\$250.00
Date: May 31st, 2026
Pay to the order of: Sprinkle Shield
For: (Tied) Third Place
Diana Quast
Signature: [Signature]

Sofia Deves | Danielle Travers | Francesca Abbott | Olivia Kelly

(TIED) THIRD PLACE PRODUCTS

Middle School Winners

This year, Project ECHO introduced its first-ever Middle School Division, allowing younger entrepreneurs to compete alongside high school teams while being scored separately against their middle school peers.



Jeff Weigel Road Warrior Award

This award was established in memory of Jeff Weigel, a cherished member of Project ECHO's Board of Directors whose passion and dedication to youth entrepreneurship enriched our mission. The award is generously funded by the Redondo Beach Rotary.



Celebrating the Dedication of our Volunteer of the Year!

Laurel Cameron, Volunteer of the Year

A longtime Project ECHO volunteer and donor, Laurel has generously served as a business coach and mentor, pitch judge, business plan reader, and competition finalists judge. Additionally, she has helped recruit colleagues to mentor our students and volunteer with our annual Business Plan Competition. Thank you, Laurel! We are deeply grateful for your continued dedication and support.



Partners Who Make It Possible



Help Keep Big Ideas Within Reach!

At Project ECHO, we believe every young person should have the opportunity to discover what they're capable of through entrepreneurship, regardless of their ability to pay. As a small nonprofit, every donation makes a meaningful difference. Your support helps us improve our programs, develop and update curriculum, subsidize enrollment fees for students and schools, and underwrite our annual Business Plan Competition, including the scholarships awarded to our young entrepreneurs.

Your gift doesn't just fund a program. It gives students the opportunity to build confidence, develop real-world skills, and turn their ideas into something real.

Help us inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs. Please consider making a donation, becoming a sponsor, or encouraging others in your network to support Project ECHO.

Join us & **DONATE TODAY!**

Meet Project ECHO's Leadership Team



From left: Matilda Albano, Program Director, and Diane Quast, Executive Director

Get In Touch!

MAlbano@projectecho.org
DQuast@projectecho.org

For more than a decade, ECHO's leadership team of Diane Quast, MPA, Executive Director & CEO, and Matilda Albano, M.Ed., Program Director, has worked together to expand programs, develop curriculum, and create innovative offerings that evolve with the needs of students and school districts, including taking Project ECHO virtual during COVID.

Diane joined Project ECHO in 2013, followed by Matilda in 2014, beginning a partnership that continues to shape the organization today. "Our partnership is built on mutual respect, a shared commitment to our mission, and the understanding that we each bring different strengths to the table, and Project ECHO is stronger because of it," says Diane.

Project ECHO is celebrating its 30th birthday!

1996-2026

About

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Schedule an Information Call

PO Box 2410
Santa Monica, CA 90407
www.projectecho.org 424-
222-9291

Since 1996, Project ECHO has empowered thousands of teens with entrepreneurial and leadership skills so they can thrive in college, in their careers, and in their communities as change-makers.

Project ECHO | P.O. Box 2410 | Santa Monica, CA 90407