

PROJECTECHO

ENTREPRENEURIAL CONCEPTS | HANDS ON



NATIONAL TEEN ENTREPRENEURS'
**Business Plan
Competition**

Project **ECHO** 2025

Co-Sponsored and Hosted by

CSUDH

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION & PUBLIC POLICY



2024 Overall Winner
OutsideConnection
Sewickley Academy

**SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR
CO-SPONSOR AND HOST**

CSUDH

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
DOMINGUEZ HILLS

**The College of Business Administration and
Public Policy welcomes and congratulates all
of the Project ECHO entrepreneurs!**



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WELCOME TO THE 21ST ANNUAL TEEN BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

Today, we celebrate innovation, creativity, and perseverance as we recognize the remarkable achievements of students who have completed the Project ECHO entrepreneurship program. These young visionaries have transformed ideas into business start-ups, and they're here to present them today.

We're excited to welcome over 250 students, in person and via Zoom, representing 53 teams competing for cash start-up funds, aka college scholarships and valuable feedback from real-world business leaders. Let's applaud their dedication, teamwork, and courage. It takes boldness to pitch your ideas in front of an audience and judges, and these students have embraced that challenge head-on.

A heartfelt thank you to all of our volunteer judges—both those who evaluated the written business plans and those serving as pitch judges today. Your time, expertise, and commitment make this experience possible and impactful for every student.

We also extend our sincere thanks to California State University, Dominguez Hills for their continued partnership and support of this event.

To all participating students: we are proud of your courage, hard work, and entrepreneurial spirit. You inspire us all.

Best regards,
Diane Quast
C.E.O.

Enroll, Start a Club, Volunteer, Donate
projectecho.org

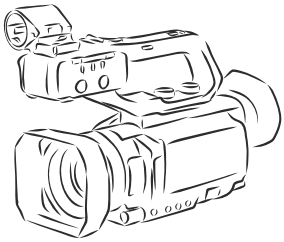
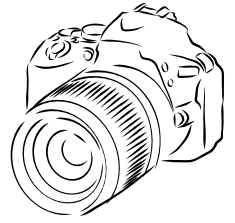
**Share your Business Plan
Competition photos!**



***@launchecho on all social media platforms
and use #ECHO2025BPC***



VIDEOTAPING AND PHOTOGRAPHY



IN PROGRESS

NOTICE: *Today's event will be videotaped and photographed. By attending today's event you are agreeing to have your likeness recorded for possible future PROJECT ECHO publications.*



EVENT SCHEDULE

7:45 am **Arrival of students, volunteers and judges**

Innovation and Instruction Building Lobby

8:30 am **Opening Remarks & Keynote Presentation**

Teacher of the Year Award Announcement

Speaker: Phil Ambrose: First Responder Entrepreneurship

9:30 am **Business Team Presentations**

Various classrooms on 2nd and 3rd floor

11:30 am - 1:00 pm **Student Lunches Available: In N' Out Truck in Parking Lot**

Students bring your lunch tickets

Limited number of lunches are available for purchase

12:00 - 1:00 pm **Judges Deliberations**

12:00 pm **Lunchtime Welcome & Keynote Speaker**

Professor Michael Grimshaw, CSUDH Welcome

Speaker: Dr. Inderpal Randhawa, Physician, Scientist,

Entrepreneur, Innovator

1:00 pm **Initial Awards & Finalists Announced**

Jeff Weigel Road Warrior Award

3rd place: Services Category & Social Entrepreneurship Category

1:30 pm **Finals Team Presentations**

3:15 pm **Awards Ceremony**

Overall Winner

Category Awards

3:30 pm **Closing Remarks**



PROJECT ECHO 2025

Business Plan Competition

One overall winner
 $\$1,000 + \$1,000 = \$2,000$

The first place team with the highest score in the
finals round will advance to Overall Winner

1st → \$1,000

2nd → \$500

3rd → \$250

1st → \$1,000

2nd → \$500

3rd → \$250
3rd → \$250

1st → \$1,000

2nd → \$500

3rd → \$250
3rd → \$250

FINALS ROUND

Room #1

Room #2

Room #3

PRODUCTS

Room #1

Room #2

SERVICES

Room #1

Room #2

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

The highest scoring team in each room will
advance to the finals round.

The Jeff Weigel Road Warrior Award

ONE TEAM GRANTED \$500

Graciously funded by the Redondo Beach Rotary Club in Jeff's honor



THE 2025 CHIP GOODMAN

Entrepreneurial Teacher of the Year Award

In recognition of your commitment to teaching entrepreneurship, and for supporting your students thoroughly as they participate in Project ECHO's program.

Presented to
Mike SooHoo, B.A., M.A.



***Redondo Union High School
Redondo Beach. CA***

Mike SooHoo holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from USC's Marshall School of Business and a Master of Arts, Teaching degree from Chapman University. Mr. SooHoo holds various teaching credentials to include Mathematics (K-12), SDAIE, ELL, Business and Finance, Marketing, and several more. Mike has been teaching at RUHS for 22 years.

"I love teaching business and personal finance because I believe it can help every person in this world and should be taught to every person in school!"



IN MEMORIAM

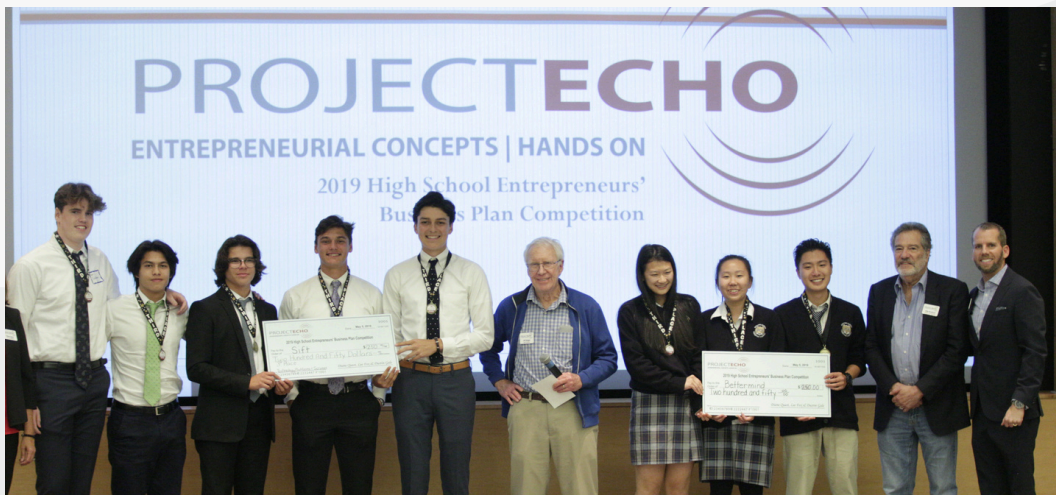
Honoring the life and legacy of



Jeff Weigel

Project ECHO Board Member

In memory of Jeff Weigel, a cherished member of the Project ECHO family whose passion and dedication enriched our mission. His invaluable contributions as a board member, committee chair, and mentor will forever inspire us. With gratitude and admiration, we commemorate his legacy through the establishment of the Road Warrior Award, named after the company he started, honoring his unwavering commitment to nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit among youth.



Jeff Weigel Road Warrior Award

Given to a team embodying Mr. Weigel's spirit of integrity, generosity and kindness and is dedicated to improving our world. This award celebrates their innovative problem-solving and commitment to the betterment of society.



MORNING KEYNOTE

Phil Ambrose

First Responder Entrepreneurship

*Phil Ambrose,
Battalion Fire Chief - CEO HazSim.com*



Phil Ambrose is a battalion chief, paramedic, and hazardous materials specialist with the Glendale Fire Department in California, where he has dedicated his career to protecting communities and improving emergency response. Most recently, he was on the front lines of the devastating Southern California wildfires.

Beyond his public service, Phil is also a successful entrepreneur and founder of HazSim, a company that develops cutting-edge training technology for first responders. His commitment to safety, innovation, and education has earned him national recognition as a thought leader in the fields of fire safety and hazardous materials. He is a regular contributor to HazMatNation and a sought-after speaker at major safety and emergency response conferences across the country.

Phil brings an engaging and proactive leadership style to every project, drawing on deep experience in emergency management, regulatory compliance, and environmental health and safety. His ability to communicate across disciplines and lead teams under pressure has made him a respected figure in the public safety community.

Outside of work, Phil is a family man, philanthropist, and lifelong surfer. Whether he's innovating in the training space or catching waves in Southern California, Phil lives with passion, purpose, and a drive to make a difference.

Learn more about Phil's story: [VoyageLA Interview](#)

hazsim.com • hazmatnation.com



LUNCHTIME KEYNOTE

Dr. Inderpal Randhawa



Entrepreneurship Unlimited

Dr. Inderpal Randhawa
Physician | Scientist | Entrepreneur | Innovator

Dr. Inderpal Randhawa's more than two-decade journey—from transplant immunologist to artificial intelligence designer to agricultural science innovator—demonstrates his dedication to continuous innovation, with data science at its core. His story is an inspiring example of how lifelong learning fuels real-world impact.

Dr. Randhawa is a physician, scientist, and entrepreneur transforming healthcare through innovation. With board certifications in internal medicine, pediatrics, allergy/immunology, and pulmonology, he has devoted his career to addressing complex and rare diseases. His groundbreaking work integrates AI, machine learning, and clinical medicine—most notably through his creation of Biosimilar Protein Immunotherapy™, which has revolutionized food anaphylaxis care. In 2019, Dr. Randhawa expanded his innovation into agriculture with Randhawa Ranch, combining data science and sustainability to advance modern farming practices.



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Jeffrey Hayzlett
Advisor



Jeff Weigel
in memoriam

LEADERSHIP STAFF



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Matilda Albano, M.Ed.
Program Director



Sara Mantich
Marketing Coordinator



Shohini Banerjee
Marketing & Fundraising
Coordinator Intern



Lisa Sando
Accounting Manager



PRODUCT TEAMS

Align well



Align Well is a product wishing to grant good health to its users. It's a lightweight electronic back brace made to aid in chronic pain and injury in the back. It can be thin, and its auto-adjustment makes its use practical as it does not weigh you down.

Frank Sepulveda, Joseph Ortmann, Sergio Gomez, Christopher Garcia, Julian Calix, Matteo Vargas

Bagology

Bagology is a customizable bag company offering backpacks, duffle bags, suitcases, and other travel accessories designed for students, travelers, and commuters. Our products feature personalization, vacuum-sealing technology for and efficient packing, to meet growing consumer demand for function, style, and sustainability. With direct-to-consumer sales, influencer marketing, and retail partnerships, Bagology aims to build a nationally recognized brand within three years.

Justin Davis, Sean Monroe, Kristian leslie, Jayden Olague, Marco Pirona



Bliss Bathrobes

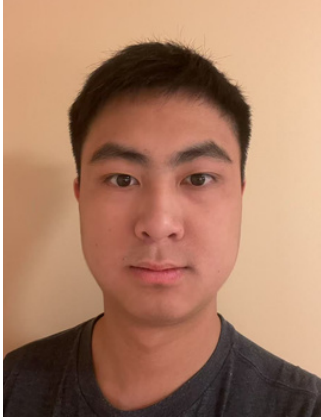


Introducing Bliss Bathrobes, a revolutionary heated robe designed to envelope you in warmth and luxury. Crafted from the finest Egyptian cotton, the bathrobe features innovative carbon fiber wires meticulously sewn throughout its soft layers, providing a soothing heat that helps you unwind after a long day. Imagine wrapping yourself in pure comfort, as the gentle warmth melts away your stress and tension.

Gia Gurley, Sadie Sybesma, Eva Roberts



PRODUCT TEAMS



EasyMean

EasyMean is a smart reading tool that helps users understand foreign or complex texts by highlighting unfamiliar words and showing their meanings in context. It also lets users review vocabulary with the original sentence and learn through fun mini-games. EasyMean makes reading easier and learning more effective for students, professionals, and language learners.

Wenhan Hu, Yicheng Xiang, Roy Pei

Flamefender

Flamefender delivers a powerful, eco-friendly wildfire defense gel that protects homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure when insurance and traditional methods fall short. Our advanced gel resists extreme heat, applies easily through a backpack sprayer, and offers unmatched longevity—giving property owners real control in fire-prone regions. With strong early financials and a mission to save lives and memories, Flamefender is redefining frontline fire protection.

Parker Hancock, Benjamin Boyarsky, Mason Clyne, Soren Roed



Fusion Denim

Fusion Denim designs stylish insulated jeans that seamlessly blend comfort and warmth, without sacrificing your individuality. Our insulated jeans are made from premium materials, offering a superior fit and quality that stands out. With a commitment to customer service and a brand built by good people, Fusion Denim delivers warm, stylish, and comfortable denim that will become a staple piece in your closet.

Sofia McGraw, Sophia Robles, Marley Casem, Coralie Hamilton



PRODUCT TEAMS

Gaia Gum



Gaia Gum is an all natural and jaw strengthening gum that offers the cleanest, healthiest, and most effective way to chew gum. Most gums have unhealthy ingredients such as titanium dioxide, petroleum bases, and plasticizers. Unlike these gum brands, Gaia Gum's number one priority is to provide an alternative that doesn't diminish our customers' health, while also keeping their jawline fresh and defined.

Maximilian Hammes, Brandon Ball, Weston Hayward, Jerry Pan, Jordan Arenzana

GlowPole Technology

At GlowPole, our mission is to create safer roads through more distinct, visible traffic signals and ease high-tension situations behind the wheel. Our product is an LED strip that runs down the existing aluminum traffic pole, designed to enhance safety and elevate the driving experience by ensuring a smoother, more secure journey on the road. By enhancing the illumination and surface area of the traffic signal, drivers will be more educated to make the strongest decision while driving in snow, fog, behind a large vehicle, or in any situation where the traditional traffic signal circle is obstructed from the driver's line of sight.

Keeley Carroll, Arden Templeton, Simone Espinoza, Kiki Hill



HoopSense



Hoop Sense is a basketball business that produces basketballs with installed tracking systems that allow users to track the ball's movements. This business will manufacture balls and sell them through retailers to teams, coaches, and players. Our ball allows users access to unseen information, allowing them to track stats, find weaknesses, and improve as a player.

Fletcher O'Brien, Joshua Pearson, Luis Palencia, Zachary Bradford



PRODUCT TEAMS

Invisible leads



Invisible leads-Immersive suspense, reasoning experience role-playing game, it is a home-friendly mystery role-playing game adapted from the popular "script kill" experience, tailored for American audiences. Players take on unique characters and solve thrilling cases inspired by Western classics like Sherlock Holmes and The Shining. Unlike existing script-kill games rooted in Chinese culture, Invisible Leads features Western-style stories and multi-language support to appeal to a broader market.

Jingbo Sun, Jingran Yu, Jiaqi Gu, Ziyou Zhou

Kowzy

Kowzy strives to provide our customers with a multi-functional towel that serves as a towel, blanket, connectable towel, and wind blocker, all at an affordable price. Being based in the South Bay, we see towels as one of the most important accessories for water activities like surfing, wakeboarding, swimming, and so much more. Kowzy saw the standard design of the towel and knew that there was room in the market for innovation.

Alexander O'Brien, Jaxon Airey, Yoshiki Kishi, Mitchel Daly



Lost Layers Streetwear

Our business "lost layers" is a streetwear brand that offers high-quality apparel that is available at an affordable price. We make that streetwear accessible to a broader audience which ensures that design and comfort are not compromised.

Bruno White, Damian martinez, Ricardo Solano



PRODUCT TEAMS

NapPack



NapPack -More Than a Bag. Built for Rest. NapPack is a new pack brand that combines storage and rest in one slim, functional design, making it ideal for students, commuters, and travelers. With a unique two-in-one product and simple focus on urban mobility and wellness, NapPack has the ability to disrupt the travel accessory industry across the U.S., Asia, and Europe.

Jason Lee, Ella Wang, Derek Zhang, Mandy Li, Isabelle Chang

PorchSafe Solutions

At PorchSafe solutions we plan to revolutionize package safety. Not only to ensure you don't lose any money but also to save you some on the price for our product compared to competitors. At PorchSafe Solutions we strive to have the upmost quality in our products to ensure the upmost safety.

Hugo Hernandez, Adrian Rivas, Adam Monterrubio, Tavish Thain, Micah Crockett



SafeStash

SafeStash is a locking stainless steel box designed to keep your packages and mail safe when you aren't home. our target customer is people who order packages ordinarily, and people who live in areas where porch piracy is common. We currently do not have any direct competitors, only in-direct which include Amazon lockers, and P.O. boxes.

Kevin Hernandez, Jayden Ross, Griffin Garner, Jaycob Hernandez, Ryland Johnson, Alberto Bissot



PRODUCT TEAMS

SpineAlign



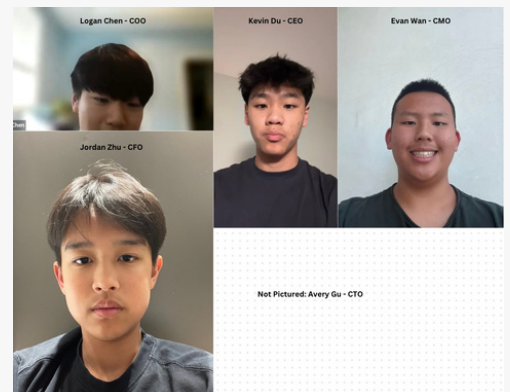
SpineAlign is a small, wearable patch that vibrates when it detects slouching, helping users maintain good posture. It is lightweight, discreet, and more comfortable than traditional posture correction devices. It will be about the size of a Band-Aid, making it almost impossible to feel on your back because of its small size, but just big enough for you to feel the subtle vibrations that will remind you to keep your posture straight.

Diego Ritson, Benjamin Cerami, Casey Woodson, Jack Lampton

Swish360

Swish360, a portable and foldable basketball hoop, is a revolutionary sports product focused on providing the amazing sport of basketball in the most convenient and versatile way. Open to players of all skill levels, Swish360 offers a professional-level playing experience at any location while also being easily stored and transported. Its quick, tool-free assembly and compact design make it ideal for use in a variety of settings such as in a driveway, a park, or even an empty parking lot.

Kevin Du, Avery Gu, Evan Wan, Jordan Zhu, Logan Chen



Titan tees



Titan tees is our startup clothing brand, designed to produce high quality shirts that fit the unique needs of football lineman. Our plan of marketing to lineman, being the overlooked demographic in the sports industry is why our company will succeed. We design our tees to perfectly fit the unique sizes and needs of lineman, far superiorly to other brands with stretchy, durable, and breathable material.

Joshua Kafka, Hunter Deeble, Luca Short, Aidan Orozco



PRODUCT TEAMS

VersaSole



We plan to change the shoe industry with sole-swapping shoes. This idea could change the shoe market, possibly forever. This will have a unique design made by athletes. They can swap their cleats for whatever sole we provide within a minute. It will be easy for the athlete to change into any sole at their convenience, but it will help improve the shoes' lifespan while saving the customer money. Swapping soles will be a cost-effective way to help.

Jack Waeger, Griffin Tagliaferri, Alexander Tiefenthaler, Dominick Yonan, Ethan Olguin

WallBloom

Wallbloom is a self-watering pot designed for plant lovers, offering a child and pet-safe solution to over and under-watering. While it hangs on any wall, freeing up floor space, the pot features dual tubes for optimal water delivery and a liftable slot for easy water release. Whether seasoned gardener or just starting out, Wallbloom elevates indoor gardening experiences and looks stunning in any setting!

Madison Chavez, Siena Anzelmi, Audrey Fleming, Ashley Lombardo



Wickender

We are Wickender. We created a product that provides safe usage of candles. Our goal is to spread the joy of using candles without fear.

Melody Pan, Howard Sheu, Gustavo Li

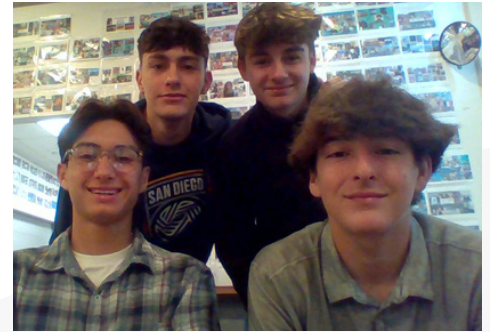


SERVICE TEAMS

Fasta Pasta

Fasta Pasta is our revolutionary take on Italian cuisine and fast food, intermingling the two worlds to create your ideal dining experience. Why choose between speed and quality when you can have both? Despite the massive love for Italian cuisine, no restaurant provides pasta made in a fast way, leaving a considerable gap in the fast food industry that we want to fill with Amore.

Noah Peralta, Nick Corte, Brian Philp, Filippo Casa



FitNest



FitNest aspires to revolutionize fitness and health by making them easily accessible to everyone. This is achieved by offering personalized equipment, tailored training regimens, and customized meal plans through a strategic partnership with a leading provider in the wellness industry. FitNest's mission is to empower customers to reach their health and fitness goals seamlessly, even with their busy lifestyles, enabling them to continue enjoying the activities they love.

Vince Cotugno, Bennett Sootkoos, Sebastian Khongsavanh, Treston Kinney

Fitted: Thrifting Finds

Fitted is revolutionizing the thrifting experience by unifying style, affordability, and community engagement. Our user-friendly online platform and app, organized and clean in-store space, and strong local ties make fashion achievable and empowering for all of our customers. Every purchase at Fitted fuels purpose, proving that amazing style can inspire real change.

Ayah Alloush, Sabrina Ezer, Kylie Fredrickson, Kya Stein



SERVICE TEAMS

HypeSeat

HypeSeat is a VR software company that offers subscription-based live and on-demand access to sports, concerts, and other events. Users can tune in through their own VR headsets and enjoy immersive, real-time views from premium seats. HypeSeat redefines live entertainment by bringing the thrill of being there—right into your home.

Sebastian Bustamante, Ronnie Yang, Henry Gao, Jonas Gao



Limitless



Limitless is an app made for making finding the personal training experience easy, trustworthy, available, and enjoyable. We aim to make our nation a healthier place by having personal trainers available to all, including kids over 10 and senior citizens. Our platform allows for our personal trainers to have freedom in what they want to train and gives them exposure, making it a win for all.

Wyatt Knupfer, Carter Smith, Brady Christman-Kelly, Christian Dominguez

Nudge

Nudge is a service that provides school news more efficiently to students and parents. It is a Google extension that we can customize depending on the school theme and name. This allows students and parents to stay informed on the next school event, providing ticket links, club food days, and more!

Michael Espinoza, Katrina Harrison, Annette Casillas, Isabella Preciado



SERVICE TEAMS

Purely Plated

Purely Plated is a fast-casual restaurant offering healthy, customizable meals through various stations like pasta, salad, soup, and smoothies. Customers can quickly build their meals using fresh, nutritious ingredients in a self-serve setup. The restaurant emphasizes convenience with a focus on sustainability, using compostable containers for easy, on-the-go dining.

Payton Earnhart, Juliette Jacob, Lara Martins Bara Menezes, Morgan Farrier



RecipEase

RecipEase is committed to optimizing people's dietary choices, reducing food waste, and improving the health and quality of life of families around the world through smart technology. RecipEase hopes to become the world's leading digital kitchen platform, leading a sustainable, healthy, and diversified dietary lifestyle.

Jenny Gao

Refract Space

Refract Space is a satellite intelligence and ground connectivity company focused on building resilient communication infrastructure for remote and underserved areas. Its flagship product is a modular, weather-sealed Ground Node device that connects to satellites for internet access, featuring Ku/Ka band reception with cellular and LoRa backup options. Designed for rapid deployment at sites like fire stations, farms, borders, and emergency zones, Refract Space bridges the gap between critical field operations and reliable digital connectivity. By combining satellite, cellular, and local mesh networks into a compact, easy-to-use system, Refract Space empowers organizations to maintain communication even when traditional infrastructure fails.

Jason Lu, Sheldon Chung, Joshua Tian, Justin Luo



SERVICE TEAMS

SeaMee

SeaMee is a web-based software that is designed for freelancers on social media platforms. It provides an intuitive all-in-one solution for portfolio presentation, client booking, client payment, and client management. SeaMee empowers the next generation of creative freelancers through simple, yet effective software solutions.

Oliver Shiekh



Summit Sports

Summit Sports is set to become the top choice for ski and snowboard gear by offering a great selection of high-quality equipment for purchase and rental at affordable prices. We focus on providing excellent customer service and building a strong community for winter sports lovers of all skill levels. With expert advice and exciting events, Summit Sports aims to inspire everyone to enjoy the thrill of the slopes.

Dylan Scanlan, Aiden Mills, John Bulson, Callahan Evans



TapIn

TapIn is the mobile app redefining the art of networking with smart, tap-to-share digital business cards and built-in follow-up tools. It enables professionals to connect instantly, stay organized, and build meaningful relationships, all while eliminating the hassle of other methods. Built for today's fast-paced, connected world, TapIn turns every interaction into a lasting connection.

Jack Murray, Anthony Hoheb, Anthony Alexander, Gabriel Pacheco



SERVICE TEAMS

TimeTide

At Timetide, we use innovative AI to self-schedule your work, allowing you to stay on top of your assignments and tasks all in the time you have. Scheduling your time personally not only decreases productivity but also increases procrastination. So follow the path of productivity and organization through us, Timetide.

Miles Anderson, Jonathan Peltier, Benjamin Waldfogel, Beckett Spjute



TimeWise

TimeWise is an innovative online platform aimed at empowering students to manage their time more efficiently and improve their academic performance. By offering personalized study plans that match individual learning styles, TimeWise helps students retain the information they learn. The app also features a curated selection of high-quality academic resources and fosters a gamified experience.

Amandine Schott, Arjun Modi, Riley O'Flynn, Angelina Molina Gonzalez



Trava

Frequently, migrants struggle to find belonging due to a lack of supportive cultural networks. Trava addresses this issue by redefining how migrants build diaspora communities and preserve cultural identity. As a B2B2C digital marketplace, Trava facilitates three core experiences: discovering local cultural events, participating in global group travel, and building long-lasting relationships through an integrated social network. Trava connects passionate guides and cultural organizations, who provide event and trip listings, to individuals seeking cultural immersion, all while functioning as a social platform where individuals can follow, message, and travel with others.

Kianna Bao, Korina Bao



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE TEAMS

Camp GLO



Camp GLO is a nonprofit weekend day camp located in California, created to empower and inspire confidence in autistic youth to reach their fullest potential. Uniquely, the camp offers a year-round service, affordable tuition, and quality and intently curated curriculum. Camp GLO is determined to make a difference in by expanding across California and becoming a household name within the autism community.

Grace Zhao, Rachel Sui, Jalen Guo, Jasmine Zhang, Aaron Chu

CauseConnect

CauseConnect is an online platform that bridges the gap between students seeking volunteer opportunities and nonprofits in need of passionate volunteers. The platform allows students to browse and sign up for volunteer opportunities that align with their interests, while providing nonprofits with an easy way to recruit and connect with volunteers. With CauseConnect, both students and nonprofits can transform passion into service, building lasting community impact.

Chloe Dalmacio



ColorSense



ColorSense is a high-tech, voice-powered color recognition system designed to support blind and visually impaired individuals. Our AI-driven wearable and mobile solution uses advanced OpenCV algorithms and real-time lighting correction to detect and announce colors with precision—even in dim or changing environments. Looking ahead, we aim to expand into autonomous vehicles, robotics, and smart infrastructure, while continuing our social mission through app and device donations for underserved communities.

Ginny Zhang, Leo (YanFeng) Guo, Avril Hang



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE TEAMS

Dreams Between the Covers



DBC aims to increase literacy levels and educational opportunities in low-income communities. We are going to help these people get books to support their learning. By giving them access to resources, they will become successful in the future and can use their knowledge to uplift others in their community.

Shoorjo Banerjee, Keyan Modi, Luna Kang, Mina Kang, Aman Foumi, Noelle Hu, Rishaan Shah, Bianca Padia, Aashna Verma

Drive4Lives

Built in response to the LA Fires, Drive4Lives is a non-profit organization that developed an app that supports natural disaster relief by connecting donations with available drivers that can transport them to those in need for just \$4. Drive4Lives utilizes existing travel patterns in citizens' daily lives to transport charity drives' resources and reduce cost while improving efficiency, and promotes the importance of community drives to support a prominent world issue. What can your drive do?

Thai Vu, Jonathan Qiu, Mio Emi, Kent Inanaga



EcoBox

Ecobox is an eco-friendly packaging solution designed to reduce environmental impact through the use of recyclable and biodegradable materials. It minimizes waste and carbon footprint by promoting sustainable practices in shipping and storage. With its durable, reusable design, Ecobox helps both businesses and consumers make greener choices.

Matthew Montes, Giuseppe Scorsone



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE TEAMS



EcoDash

Eco Dash is an on-demand, any day, high school dashers-powered service that picks up your unwanted junk items and gives them a second life through reselling, up-cycling, recycling, or donating. With a minimal pickup fee, we save you space, time, and effort, all while helping keep junk out of landfills and rewarding our customers for their work. EcoDash is not just cleanup; it's cleanup with a purpose.

Tanishka Duche

Mind Over Matter

Mind Over Matter is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering high school athletes through the principles of sports psychology. We provide tailored mental training programs that enhance athletic performance, boost confidence, and promote overall well-being on campus. Our mission is to foster resilience and a winning mindset, helping young athletes navigate the pressures of competition both on and off the field.

Callie Chenfu, Devin Watanabe, Ethan Yee



NurseAI

NurseAI is a nurse-friendly app that combines real-time SDOH screening, resource referrals, and a built-in Nurse Reference Guide. This all-in-one tool empowers nurses with both clinical knowledge and social care resources to drive better patient outcomes while reducing nurse burnout.

Guntas Dhanjal, Sunay Raval





Rash Bags

We are starting a business that sells reusable trash bags made from eco-friendly materials. Our goal is to reduce waste and encourage people to make sustainable choices in their daily lives. By offering a durable option, we aim to make a positive impact on the environment.

Santino Villasenor, David Pena, Ian Huitron, Jayden Woods, Devin Perez

ReTech for Kids

ReTech for Kids is a youth-led nonprofit organization based in Richmond, Virginia, dedicated to collecting, refurbishing, and donating second-hand technology to underserved students. To date, ReTech for Kids has collected nearly \$20,000 worth of devices, has partners in five different states, and has over 30 dedicated student volunteers. Our mission is to curb the alarming growth of electronic waste across the globe while simultaneously bridging the digital divide in education.

Chris Qian



Revair

Revair is a revolutionary product that seeks to shake up the vape detector market. We seek to decrease the huge number of teen vapers, and we want to help students leave nicotine behind. Through our product, we want to make a change while creating a competitive product that outperforms other vape detectors.

Amber Luo, Coco Bai, Kingston Lu, Daniel Huang





SeniorCare

SeniorCare is a solution aimed at improving home care for seniors. SeniorCare provides a AI-powered home care coordination app. The app simplifies scheduling, caregiver matching, and medical tracking, reducing stress for families and ensuring high-quality senior care.

Amin Ali

SensorySync

SensorySync aims to provide a better communication method between caretakers and nonverbal children. We hope to make a meaningful impact by launching a one-of-a-kind interactive wearable watch geared toward helping nonverbal kids communicate simple needs and requests to their parents. As an accessible and customizable communication tool, SensorySync empowers both children and caretakers.

Lucas Ho, Anna Chen, Jason Xie, Erik Xiong, Brice Chen



Volign

The process of finding volunteering opportunities, actually volunteering, and then recording your activities and hours is decentralized, resulting in an over complication of the system and higher levels of inaccessibility for volunteers. Our business is Volign, a mobile app providing intermediary services dedicated to solving this problem by providing a platform to centralize the volunteering process for both organizations and volunteers, directly removing the barriers faced by volunteers and nonprofit organizations. As a non-profit organization, we hope to become the Facebook of the volunteering world, the all-in-one solution to creating an interconnected network.

Alistair Wu, Aryan Sharma, Mason Ghose, Topher Cornell





Wellness Finder

Wellness finder is an app and website that helps with weight loss or gain, and diabetes care. You can use our vast food library and activity to find out nutrients and about how many calories you're burning. Also, you can connect with diabetes and medical specialists, and you can order meal kits through the app as well.

Brooks Woomer, Tiago Ulloa, Marcus Kalta

A Sincere Thank You to Our Judges and Volunteers

We extend our deepest gratitude to all the incredible judges who have generously volunteered their time and expertise to support Project ECHO and this year's Business Plan Competition.

Over 50 remote judges, from 20 different states, played a crucial role in reviewing and evaluating student business plans in the early rounds of the competition. Today, 25 dedicated judges are joining us in person to listen to live startup presentations and offer invaluable feedback.

A special thank you goes out to those judges who went above and beyond—supporting the program not only with their time but also with a financial contribution. Their generosity has earned them well-deserved VIP recognition.

Additional volunteers served as program mentors and business coaches supporting teens on this journey. This experience has become transformative for our students, putting them on a path to college and future careers. Thank you for helping us inspire the next generation of business leaders and future changemakers.



VIP JUDGE



Akira Nakano

VIP Pitch Competition Judge

Akira Nakano is the Founder, President, and Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Inception Orchestra, a nonprofit currently looking to bring music education to people of all abilities. He also serves as Program Officer at the Fox Family Foundation, where he currently works alongside Fellows of all abilities to produce the Innovating Inclusion podcast and accompanying curriculum, whose goal is to bring the concept of universal design, access, advocacy, and inclusion to everyone.



CONGRATULATIONS
PROJECT ECHO
ENTREPRENEURIAL CONCEPTS | HANDS ON
ENTREPRENEURS



JOIN US FOR THE RELAUNCH,
BRINGING MUSIC & DANCE TO
STUDENTS OF ALL ABILITIES!

SATURDAYS
in May

10 AM - NOON

CONTACT AKIRA NAKANO
INCEPTIONORCHESTRA.ORG



VIP JUDGE



Chaitanya Reddy Krishnama

VIP Business Plan Judge

Chaitanya Reddy Krishnama is a Data Analytics professional with a strong background in data integration, business intelligence, and quality assurance. He has led initiatives to enhance data accuracy, streamline workflows, and optimize reporting systems that support strategic decision-making. Mr. Krishnama has worked to resolve complex data issues, ensure regulatory compliance, and drive high-quality outcomes. His leadership is grounded in a passion for data integrity and a commitment to using technology to foster impactful business solutions.

Congratulations!

You identified critical data challenges.

You engineered innovative solutions.

You built robust ETL pipelines and BI reporting ecosystems.

You drove QA excellence and ensured data trustworthiness.

You championed strategic insights that empowered businesses.

You courageously shaped a future where data drives real-world impact.



VIP JUDGE



Evan Schlessinger

VIP Business Plan Judge

Evan Schlessinger is the President of the Springboard Company, a new products research and consulting firm based in Los Angeles. The Springboard Company focuses on helping companies to drive revenue through innovation and consumer insights. The work of Evan Schlessinger has been featured in the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, Newsweek, CBS This Morning, and the ABC Home Show, as well as countless trade publications. With over 40 years of marketing and new product development expertise, Mr. Schlessinger has led efforts for major food brands such as Bumble Bee, Chef Boyardee, Kool-Aid, and Entenmann's and spearheaded the introduction of third-party gift cards into the supermarket industry. He is also a leading expert in consumer research, an Angel Investor, and serves as a Board Member, Lecturer, and Corporate Adviser.

Congratulations to all participants! Your entrepreneurial drive and innovative ideas are truly inspiring. I'm excited to witness the next generation of leaders who are pushing boundaries and making a lasting impact. As Seneca would say, "No one is wise by chance; It is the result of toil and struggle, trial and error, and so many things. Wisdom is work!"



VIP JUDGE



Faiz Gouri

VIP Business Plan Judge

Faiz Gouri is a Lead Software Engineer at Microsoft with over 12 years of experience specializing in AI, machine learning, distributed systems, and cloud optimization. Mr. Gouri has extensive leadership experience mentoring teams, judging and advising hackathons, reviewing for journals and conferences, and speaking at industry events. His technical expertise includes designing scalable architectures, optimizing big data processing, and using AI-driven insights to enhance system performance and efficiency. Passionate about emerging technologies, Mr. Gouri thrives on solving complex challenges, driving innovation, and collaborating with cross-functional teams. He also serves as an AI advisor for nonprofit organizations, helping to drive positive change through technology.

Well done to each and every one of you who took part in this year's National Teen Entrepreneurs' Business Plan Competition.

Your work reflected thoughtful research, sharp problem-solving, and a bold approach to creating change. It's not easy to take an idea from concept to pitch, but you rose to the challenge with energy and purpose.

This competition is not just about winning—it's about daring to think differently, pushing boundaries, and learning how to grow through feedback. These are the qualities that shape strong, future-ready leaders.





Himabindu Gurajada

VIP Business Plan Judge

Himabindu Gurajada is a highly skilled and results-driven Data Scientist with over 17 years of experience in designing, implementing, and managing data solutions in large-scale environments. She has a track record of leading teams in the development of complex data pipelines, performing data analysis, QA, and producing actionable insights to drive business decisions.

Congratulations on all your accomplishments so far. Your journey reflects passion, perseverance, and purpose – and this is only the beginning. Here's to continued success and all that lies ahead.



VIP JUDGE



Holly Richardson

VIP Pitch Competition Judge

Holly Richardson has over 30 years of experience in retail buying, product development, and management. Her most recent position was Group Vice President for a leading off-price retailer, where her responsibilities included mentoring and developing teams of buyers and assistants, creating seasonal assortment strategies, and ensuring financial targets were met. She has merchandising experience across a broad range of businesses, including Furniture and Home Accents, Moderate Missy and Special Size Sportswear, Dresses, and Juniors. Ms. Richardson is known for her ability to craft strategic business visions and inspire teams to exceed sales and gross margin goals.

Congratulations to each of you for bringing your ideas to life with such energy and determination. It takes creativity, strategic thinking, and teamwork to build something meaningful – qualities that will serve you well in the future. I'm inspired by your ambition and can't wait to see the success you'll achieve in the years ahead.



VIP JUDGE



Josie Garcia

VIP Pitch Competition Judge

Josie Garcia is a strategic Product Manager passionate about building data-driven solutions at the intersection of AI, analytics, and business strategy. With a sharp instinct for identifying opportunities and a collaborative spirit, she partners closely with data engineers and cross-functional teams to translate complex problems into scalable, high-impact products. From shaping vision to launching execution-ready roadmaps, Ms. Garcia thrives in fast-moving environments where innovation and measurable outcomes go hand in hand.

Her product leadership is grounded in empathy, clarity, and a relentless focus on value—whether she’s guiding AI-based tools or optimizing internal data workflows. A champion for inclusive innovation, Ms. Garcia leads DEI efforts as part of her Women in Tech ERG and gives back by serving on the board of the Child Creativity Lab, where she supports hands-on learning for youth. She’s driven by curiosity, purpose, and a desire to make tech work better for people.

Building something from the ground up takes more than just a great idea—it takes courage, resilience, and a vision for a better future. Each of you has already shown these qualities through your journey. Stay curious, stay brave, and never lose sight of the impact you can have. I can't wait to see the brilliant paths you forge ahead.



VIP JUDGE



Laurel Cameron

VIP Pitch Competition Judge

Laurel Cameron spent 33 years in the CPG food industry, culminating as the Senior Vice President of Sales at Bumble Bee Seafoods, before transitioning to non-profit work. With over 15 years of experience, she has served on the boards of Princeton's YWCA and Lincroft's Fire Company, where she advocated on Capitol Hill and participated in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW). She also created a NEXT GEN Board of young women leaders and managed a juried Craft Fair fundraiser. Ms. Cameron is currently the President of the Rotary Club of Redondo Beach Community Foundation.

CONGRATULATIONS!

**You identified a need,
developed the solution,
built the Business Plan,
created the Presentation,
and courageously brought forth your creation.**

YOU ARE ALREADY A WINNER!



VIP JUDGE



Laxman Doddipatla

VIP Business Plan Judge

Laxman Doddipatla is a Technology Engineer at PNC Financial Services, with over 16 years of experience in the Securities Lending and Payments domain. He has collaborated with major financial institutions to architect and implement advanced payment processing solutions that enhance efficiency and scalability.

In addition to his engineering role, Mr. Doddipatla has a six-year background as a research scholar in Science, Engineering, and Technology. He also serves as an Editor for Engineering and Technology Reviews, contributing to the academic rigor and quality of published research.

Mr. Doddipatla is recognized for his deep expertise in Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, and the application of Blockchain in financial technology. He has made substantial contributions to the field through numerous high-impact review articles, both as a lead and co-author, with a focus on integrating critical thinking into business and technology research.

Each of you has demonstrated exceptional vision and dedication in bringing your ideas to fruition. Continue to advance with determination and embrace the challenges that lie ahead.



VIP JUDGE



Louis Raprager

VIP Pitch Competition Judge

Louis Raprager is a Human Resources Management major at California State University, Dominguez Hills, with a strong passion for veteran advocacy, small business development, and social impact initiatives. He serves as Vice President of Tau Sigma and contributes to several campus organizations, including the Veteran Resource Center and CSUDH Innovation Incubator. Mr. Raprager is the author of *Unfulfilled Promises* and has a forthcoming book set to be released in February 2026, both of which focus on the veteran experience and societal change. Drawing on his background in research and public speaking, he has shared insights on veteran identity at national conferences. He also works as a Human Resources Specialist at WestCal Academy, where he supports inclusive, people-centered strategies to drive organizational impact.

**Congratulations to all the participants!
Your entrepreneurial spirit and hard
work are truly inspiring. Keep pushing
forward, and I'm excited to see what
you achieve next.**



VIP JUDGE



Maureen Charles

VIP Pitch Competition Judge

Maureen Charles, author of YA Biography *Music Mavens*, is passionate about the power of story to open hearts and minds. She is the cofounder of Love Of Aging, an organization dedicated to creating a new narrative for aging, and serves as Board Chair at Aid Still Required, an NGO serving Haiti's most impoverished communities. A master of persuasive writing, she has written hundreds of winning business proposals. She has also trained over 2,000 community leaders in the LA area, empowering them to realize their visions. Through her work, she continues to inspire positive change and growth in the communities she serves.

Congratulations on your...

**Creativity,
Resourcefulness,
Work Ethic,
Intelligence,
and
Commitment.**

**Your generation dares to imagine a bright, bold future.
Keep dreaming.**



VIP JUDGE



Maya Kupperman

VIP Business Plan Judge

Maya Kupperman is the Co-Founder and CEO of Temelio, an innovative grants management software company launched in 2022. Her career spans diverse sectors, including nonprofit leadership, family philanthropy, software, and strategic consulting with McKinsey & Company, where she advised Fortune 500 companies, state governments, and nonprofits. Last year, Ms. Kupperman and her co-founder, Mr. Pathireddy, were on the Forbes 30 Under 30 list, spotlighted for the social impact category. Ms. Kupperman holds a BA in Human Biology, Education, and Dance from Stanford University.

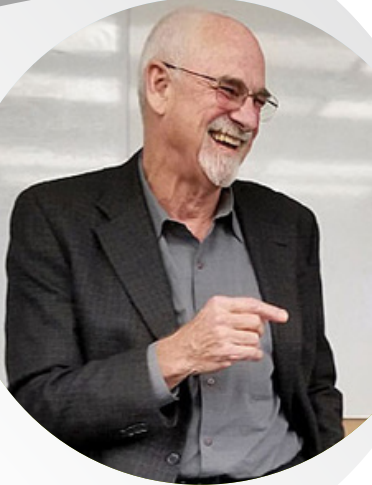
Congratulations to all business plan competition participants! I am so proud of each and every one of you for taking on the challenge of this business plan competition. It takes creativity, courage, and a lot of hard work to bring an idea to life—and you’ve done just that! Whether you pitched a bold new concept, crunched the numbers, or polished a killer presentation, you’ve taken a big step toward becoming future innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders. These skills will serve you well no matter where life takes you.



VIP JUDGE

Michael Grimshaw

VIP Pitch Competition Judge



As a Business Management/Entrepreneurship faculty member and Advisory Board member at California State University-Dominguez Hills, Michael Grimshaw has the pleasure of teaching and inspiring students to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams and reach their potential. With over 30 years of experience as a Managing Partner at The Grimshaw Group, Mr. Grimshaw has founded, funded, and mentored more than 15 start-up companies across various sectors, including technology, education, and social impact. He has also successfully led several innovative start-ups to funding, acquisition, or IPO, including Equinox Networks, Cascade, Shasta Networks, and Ellacoya.

He is the Founder of The Sandbox at CSUDH, where he nurtures a strong entrepreneurial spirit and creates a haven of entrepreneurship for students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding business and civic community. He is also a Co-Founder of Serious-Improv!, a leadership training company that employs improvisational techniques to enhance communication, creativity, and collaboration skills in businesses and organizations. Furthermore, he actively invests as an angel investor and belongs to various professional associations, such as the LA Venture Association, the Institute of Management Consultants, and a variety of Advisory Boards. Additionally, he is a certified executive coach and a Vietnam veteran awarded the Bronze Star.

**Congratulations and best wishes to Project ECHO students
for pursuing entrepreneurship in their lives.
For best results, include "Improv."**

The Team

Mike Grimshaw

Areas of Expertise
Start-up founding & mentoring, Financial strategies for small business, Branding, PR, Marketing & Sales, Engaged Learning techniques, Technology Implementation, and creative classroom tools. Angel Investor

Professional Background
Mike Grimshaw has over 35 years' Founder, Principal, senior level sales, management and start-up experience in the highly competitive technology industry with industry leaders IBM, Cisco, Andrew, Nortel, and Unisys. He has successfully launched/sold new strategic products and won numerous awards for his contributions. Mike as an entrepreneur founded 15+ companies and was the founder and President of Pace Data and President of Israeli based RAD Network Devices. Mike has proven success in the challenge of bringing innovative start-up companies – Equinox Networks, Cascade, Shasta Networks and Ellacoya to funding, acquisition or IPO.



Nate Lee

Areas of Expertise
Leadership and management training, Business improvisation, Creative problem solving, Communication, Brainstorming, Customer engagement, Marketing strategy, Branding, Writing, Copy editing

Professional Background
A graduate of Second City's improv school and lead in Second City's Children's Theatre, Nate has employed improv skills in a variety of careers and management positions. As a writer and ultimately a creative director of a global ad agency, Nate has written and produced national campaigns for P&G, McDonald's, Mazda, Taco Bell and Mattel. He has been a partner in a small LA ad agency, senior editor of a weekly newspaper in Chicago, and a performer at Disneyland. Nate has also written several books of skills and one-act plays for pre-teens to perform, as well as the lyrics for a musical about the 1920s.

<https://new.goldamerican.com/seriousimprov/>

**serious
!improv**



VIP JUDGE



Michael Stark

VIP Pitch Competition Judge

Michael Stark is a retired CEO with over 18 years of executive leadership in Logistics and Supply Chain Management, having also served as COO and CHRO in the same industry. With more than 40 years of progressively increasing responsibility, his experience spans supply chain, logistics, marketing services, financial services, and the food industry, including leadership in global and private equity-backed companies. He has held executive roles in operations, human resources, corporate communications, sales, organizational development, and more, driving growth through strategic integration and strong employee engagement. His specialties include developing vision and strategy, managing acquisitions and turnarounds, cultural integration, talent alignment, and enhancing EBITDA and CAGR across diverse industries. Mr. Stark currently serves as President-Elect of the Rotary Club of Redondo Beach and has volunteered for 52 years as a Reserve Officer and now as a Cold-Case Investigator with the Redondo Beach Police Department.

Congratulations to all the finalist teams. You created a vision and developed the plan for execution. Both outstanding skills to have in your business career. Good luck with your final presentations!



VIP JUDGE



Nayan Mittal

VIP Business Plan Judge

As a visionary product leader, Nayan Mittal has revolutionized the tech landscape through his innovative endeavors. With over a decade of entrepreneurial experience, he successfully founded and grew a startup in India, later leveraging his expertise as a product manager at Amazon. Currently, Mr. Mittal drives global growth for Meta's messaging platform, touching the lives of billions worldwide. His product development expertise spans edtech ventures backed by prominent investors like Sequoia Capital and the World Bank's International Finance Corporation.

As co-founder of Sugoi Labs, Mr. Mittal has transformed numerous startups into market-ready products. A strategic leader and passionate innovator, he excels in managing cross-functional teams. Mr. Mittal also fuels the startup ecosystem as a judge and angel investor, nurturing emerging talent and ideas. His remarkable achievements demonstrate sustained national or international acclaim, showcasing his influence in the tech industry.

To all the talented young entrepreneurs who participated, I offer my warmest congratulations! Whether your business plan was selected or not, your hard work and innovative thinking shine through. Keep pushing boundaries, learning, and striving for excellence – the future of business and innovation is bright with talent like yours. Best wishes for your future endeavors!



VIP JUDGE



Raghavender Reddy Puchhakayala

VIP Business Plan Judge

With about 14 years of experience in the IT industry, Raghavender Puchhakayala has built a strong background in Data Warehousing, Business Intelligence (BI), and Analytics across sectors including Banking, Healthcare, Financial Services, Insurance, and Retail. Currently an Analytics Solutions Associate Sr. at JP Morgan Chase, he specializes in BI system migrations, executive dashboard development, data optimization initiatives, and end-to-end software development life cycles.

Mr. Puchhakayala's technical expertise spans Tableau, Business Objects, Cognos Analytics, Jasper Reports, Power BI, PL/SQL, and AWS Redshift. He combines deep technical skills with a sharp eye for uncovering hidden opportunities in data, driving smarter, faster decision-making and tangible business growth. His focus on data governance, AI-driven analytics, and advanced reporting solutions enables organizations to turn complex data landscapes into strategic assets.

Passionate about helping organizations and communities make smarter decisions, Mr. Puchhakayala leverages creative and analytical problem-solving to tackle complex business challenges. A lifelong learner, Senior IEEE member, and a fellow member of other professional societies, he holds certifications including Tableau Desktop Specialist, Microsoft Azure Fundamentals, and AWS Cloud Practitioner. He is committed to continuous growth, quick adaptation to new technologies, and delivering impactful, innovative BI solutions.

**Turning data into opportunity,
innovation into action.**

**Congratulations, future leaders — your journey
to reshape industries starts now.**

**"Inspiring smart decisions, bold innovation,
and unstoppable success."**



VIP JUDGE



Rahul Autade

VIP Business Plan Judge

Rahul Autade is a seasoned fintech and payments expert with over 22 years of industry experience. He has led and implemented payment processing engines for top U.S. banks and has deep expertise in AI, cybersecurity, and financial innovation. Mr. Autade is actively involved in mentoring and judging business plan competitions, hackathons, and academic conferences across the globe. He has previously served as a judge for student-focused events such as the Youth Business Summit (YBS) and the VEI Virtual Reality Expo (VRX), providing critical feedback and guidance to emerging talent. As a member of IEEE and a keynote speaker at international forums, he brings a unique blend of technical depth and business insight. At Project ECHO, Mr. Autade is honored to serve as a VIP judge, supporting and inspiring the next generation of high school entrepreneurs. He also contributes as a reviewer for research journals and is passionate about bridging the gap between emerging technology and business strategy.

To all the young innovators participating in this competition – your creativity, passion, and bold ideas are truly inspiring. Remember, every great business once started with a single idea and the courage to pursue it. Don't be afraid to take risks, learn from every experience, and keep pushing forward. You are the future of innovation, and this is just the beginning of your journey. Believe in yourself and keep building!



VIP JUDGE



Rakesh Kumar

VIP Business Plan Judge

Rakesh Kumar is a Senior Staff Software Engineer at Lyft, leading teams (50+ engineers) to build and scale Machine Learning platforms and real-time systems. With 16+ years of experience, he specializes in MLOps, distributed systems, and cloud technologies, driving impactful engineering solutions. An accomplished engineering leader, he has spearheaded the creation of sophisticated ML infrastructure to unlock business potential and accelerate product delivery. He is passionate about nurturing engineering talent and takes a hands-on leadership approach to foster growth and innovation within his teams. His expertise enables the design of systems capable of processing millions of real-time events per minute, resulting in faster product rollouts and greater operational efficiency.

Congratulations on crafting those impressive business plans and delivering such strong presentations! You've all shown true entrepreneurial spirit and are winners in my book.



VIP JUDGE



Ramakrishna Ramadugu

VIP Business Plan Judge

Ramakrishna Ramadugu is an accomplished leader and researcher with over 22 years of experience in the Fintech industry, specializing in financial technology, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and green technologies. He has served in key leadership roles across both academic and industry sectors, contributing to cutting-edge advancements in digital payments and regulatory technologies.

As a thought leader, Mr. Ramadugu has delivered keynote talks and actively participated in international conferences, including IEEE, where he has also served as a peer reviewer. Deeply committed to empowering young minds, he has judged 12 speech and debate tournaments across 48 rounds in Pennsylvania state schools and regularly evaluates hackathons and business innovation events, championing creativity and critical thinking.

He is honored to serve as a VIP Judge for Project ECHO, celebrating the vision, passion, and ingenuity of student entrepreneurs who are redefining the future through bold and meaningful solutions.

It is an honor to serve as a VIP Judge for Project ECHO. I am continually inspired by the innovation, passion, and leadership these young changemakers bring to the table. Congratulations to all participants; your ideas have the power to shape a better world.



VIP JUDGE



Rick Nott

VIP Pitch Competition Judge

Rick Nott is a Managing Director at Angeles Investments and brings over 15 years of experience in wealth management and private equity to the families and institutions he serves. As their 'Personal CFO' he helps solve some of the most complex financial issues on their path through entrepreneurship, business ownership and exit. Mr. Nott is a CFA charterholder and earned a B.A. in Economics from the University of California, at Irvine.

Congratulations to all participants!

You've overcome obstacles, refined your vision, and brought your idea this far. The journey may be long and challenging, but every step brings growth—and the view from the top is worth it.

**Your determination already sets you apart
—keep climbing!**



VIP JUDGE



Sudarshan Kotha

VIP Business Plan Judge

Sudarshan Kotha is a distinguished Data Architect and Engineer with over 15 years of experience delivering high-performance data solutions that drive business growth. His expertise covers the full data lifecycle - design, ingestion, transformation, storage, retrieval, and AI-driven analytics, across industries like Banking, Semiconductors, Retail, and Healthcare. He specializes in ETL frameworks, Big Data technologies, cloud computing, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Data Science, Generative AI, and database optimization. Known for leading cross-functional teams, he builds scalable, resilient systems aligned with strategic business goals. An IEEE Senior Member, IETE Fellow, SAS Society Fellow, and IOASD Fellow, Mr. Kotha has served as a judge for several global conferences and award platforms. He remains committed to innovation, research, mentorship, and advancing the broader technology community.

It is an honor to volunteer with Project ECHO as a judge and witness the incredible innovation, leadership, and creativity demonstrated by all of you. Today, we celebrate your hard work, bold ideas, and commitment to making an impact. Your passion and determination are inspiring, and I am excited to see the amazing contributions you will continue to make to the world. Congratulations to all of you on an outstanding achievement!



VIP JUDGE



Tammie Arrata

VIP Pitch Competition Judge

Tammie Arrata serves as the Head of National Accounts at Farwest Corrosion, where she leads strategic customer engagement and drives business development initiatives across the utility and energy sectors. With over 25 years of sales experience, including more than eight years focused on cathodic protection, Ms. Arrata brings a deep understanding of corrosion control and infrastructure support. Prior to her work in corrosion, she spent over two decades in the missile defense industry, supporting critical national defense programs.

Ms. Arrata is a former Chair of the NACE (National Association of Corrosion Engineers) Board and currently serves as the Student and Scholarship Chair for The Association for Materials Protection and Performance, continuing her commitment to industry advancement and talent development.

Outside of work, Ms. Arrata volunteers at the Carson Animal Care Center, supporting animal rescue and adoption efforts in her community. She is a registered Native Hawaiian and a Kumu Hula, a cultural practitioner and teacher of traditional Hawaiian dance and values, dedicated to preserving and sharing the heritage of her ancestors.

**Success isn't about having all the answers
—it's about having the courage to ask the
right questions, take bold steps, and stay
true to your vision. Keep building, keep
learning, and remember: every challenge is
a stepping stone, not a stop sign.**



VIP JUDGE



Walter Campbell

VIP Pitch Competition Judge

Walter Campbell worked at Cambridge Research Institute, then acted as an independent management consultant for more than 10 years. He was a co-owner of ISYS Corporation, then CFO and CEO of City Gardens, Inc., a building service company. He is currently an investment partner at Forest Properties, Cambridge, MA.

He graduated with a BA from Harvard College and later earned an MBA from Harvard Business School. He now lives in Redondo Beach.

**Congratulations to all the
finalists and good luck
with your future projects!**



JUDGES



Amy Zimmerman

As the founder of one of the top 100 women-owned businesses, Ms. Zimmerman celebrated 32 years in business on April 1, 2025, and has grown her team to 17 dedicated employees. Throughout her career, she has helped more than 3,350 individuals find meaningful and fulfilling careers. Even in challenging economic times, Ms. Zimmerman's extensive network of business professionals has enabled her to consistently connect talent with opportunity.

Anita Stoddard

Anita Reviczky Stoddard majored in Biological Studies and Bioorganic Chemistry. She began her career as a research assistant in Nephrology and Perinatal at Harbor UCLA Medical Center. Ms. Stoddard changed careers and transitioned into teaching high school science courses, first at Hawthorne High School and then Redondo Union High School. She taught Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Physiology, and earned a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction in 2014. Ms. Stoddard retired from teaching in June of 2021 and currently enjoys giving back to her community as an active member of the Rotary Club of Redondo Beach.



Bhoomika Ghosh

Bhoomika Ghosh is a Senior Technical Product Manager at Amazon with over 10 years of experience in tech consulting and consumer services, supporting business strategy and AI product execution across 20+ teams. She is a core team member of Women in Tech and Leadership community in Seattle and has spoken on technical career roles at Harvard. With a Master's degree in Management of Information Systems and a Bachelor's degree in Engineering, she bridges theoretical knowledge with real-world tech applications.



JUDGES



Candace Shivers-Morgan

Candace Shivers-Morgan is co-founder of the Love of Aging movement and a sought-after international speaker on attitude and aging. She has presented keynote addresses at the Conference for Global Transformation, the UCLA Health 50+ Conference, and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. For 36 years, she was a Director, Faculty Member, and Program Designer for Landmark Worldwide, where she trained over 10,000 people to lead Landmark's personal and professional development programs.

Chacko Kannothis

Chacko Kannothis is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Management & Marketing at CSU Dominguez Hills, where he teaches the undergraduate capstone course in Strategic Management and other classes at the College of Business. He holds a PhD from UMass Boston, and his research explores how individuals, organizations, and institutions drive social change through entrepreneurship. His work has been published in top journals, including the *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Business and Society*, and the *Global Strategy Journal*.



Dawn Schroeder Telleson

As Associate Director of Graduate Career Management at USC Marshall School of Business, Dawn Schroeder Telleson transforms career trajectories by combining Fortune 500 leadership experience with strategic career development expertise. Her multicultural background leading global teams across Asia, Europe, and Latin America enables her to uniquely prepare first-generation students and student-athletes for today's competitive global marketplace. Drawing from executive roles at IPG, Sony Pictures, and Warner Bros, she brings data-driven insights and proven frameworks to accelerate professional growth.



JUDGES



James Staton Jr.

James Staton Jr. is a Founding Partner of Top Flight Foundation LLC, a nonprofit committed to identifying, training, and scaling top-performing entrepreneurs to meet Tier 1 corporate standards. As an accomplished executive, public and motivational speaker, and published author in national and international magazines, he brings a wealth of experience to his work. He also serves as a board member and strategic advisor to CEOs, offering guidance on leadership and growth. Throughout his career, Mr. Staton has led successful turnarounds with a focus on leadership development, executive coaching, and helping individuals maintain personal balance while pursuing their life goals.

Jerry Heikens

Jerry Heikens is the Co-Founder of iNov8 Capital and CEO of JTH Strategies, with over 30 years of experience in business development and philanthropic advisory across both profit and nonprofit sectors. Known for bridging communities and capital, he formerly served as Executive Director of TiE SoCal Angels, playing a pivotal role in the startup ecosystem by connecting investors, startups, accelerators, and partners. He holds a Magna Cum Laude BSBA from Walden University.



Kyle Stewart

Kyle Stewart is a finance and strategy leader who has worked with startups and mission-driven organizations across tech, infrastructure, and education. He currently runs The FCST, a fractional CFO consultancy, and previously served as Senior Vice President of Operations at EVPassport and Director of Financial Planning and Analysis at Community. He began his career in education at KIPP DC and holds an MBA from UCLA Anderson.



JUDGES



Nate Lee

Nate Lee is a seasoned creative professional with a diverse background spanning publishing, advertising, and entertainment. He has held leadership roles including Senior Editor at NewCity Publications, VP, Creative Director at FCB Advertising, and Partner at PointGroup Ideas. A former Disneyland performer and published children's book author, Mr. Lee is currently focused on writing books and working as a freelance writer.

Peipei Ma

Peipei Ma manages B2B business for two business units. She is the founder of EvolveX, a nonprofit focused on solving growth challenges for small and medium-sized businesses, and DeAo, a startup incubated under Siemens Healthineers in China. Through her work, Ms. Ma drives innovation and growth across both corporate and entrepreneurial ventures.



Rida Elias

Rida Elias is an Assistant Professor of Management at California State University, Dominguez Hills, where she teaches strategy and organizational behavior. She brings 12 years of experience as a management consultant, advising firms on strategy and leadership. Her research focuses on CEO succession, governance, and knowledge transfer, and she is passionate about mentoring students.



JUDGES



Thai Buckman

As Director of Technology & Innovation, Thai Buckman engages in planning and strategic partnerships. Annually, she works with partners, Annenberg Foundation, Greater LA Fund Education, and LEEAFE on a youth entrepreneurship program.

Todd Davis

Todd Davis, holding a BA from Penn State and an MBA from Duquesne University, specializes in sales, marketing, and product licensing. With a diverse career spanning the toy industry, publishing, Procter & Gamble, and other firms, Mr. Davis brings a wealth of experience in driving business growth and innovation.



Ahmed Ogundimu

Akinyemi Michael Iledare

Akshay Choudhry

Amar Saurabh

Amos Ogunola

Anaranya Bagchi

Anindya Saha

Anjan Kumar Ayyadapu

Anshul Gandhi

Anuja Bairat

Aravind Nuthalapati

Ashwarya Arora

Becky Ying Zhang

Bhashwanth Kadapagunta

Dinesh Besiahgari

Diana Loreda

Gautham Vedanthi

Harsheeta Venkoba Rao

Ileana Castaneda

Jacob Truong

Jennifer Brodmann

Jessica Ochoa

Kanupriya Yakhmi

Karthick Ramachandran

Kirsti Jane

Krishna Sasank Talasila

Kuber Jain

Lorenza Velez

Mallery McMurtrey

Ola Oshunluyi

Pradeep Kumar Muthukamatchi

Prateek Mittal

Raphael Yewande

Saahil Dama

Santhosh Kusuma Kumar Parimi

Shashank Kapadia

Siddharth Shroff

Sridhar Kumar Irujolla

Sudhanva Hebbale

Sudharshan Tumkunta

Suri Nuthalapati

Tirumala Rao Chimpiri

Ying Mao

Yona Ngo



Thank you to our Room Managers



Evelyn Tellez
Child Development



Imari Taylor
Psychology



Jacob Truong
Business Administration
& Management



Johnnell Bragg
Marketing &
Advertising



Kumar Abhinav
Computer Science,
Film & Media



Sebastian Linan
Journalism &
Media Relations



Ty Herring
Sports, Entertainment,
Hospitality Management

Room Managers are an important part of Project ECHO's Teen Entrepreneurs' Business Plan Competition. Room Managers are CSUDH university students that have been trained to facilitate a classroom pitch competition. This includes managing presentation schedules, assisting teams as they prepare to present their start-up pitches, and facilitation of the judges' Q & A with each team.

ROOM
MANAGERS



PROJECT ECHO

ENTREPRENEURIAL CONCEPTS | HANDS ON



NATIONAL TEEN ENTREPRENEURS'

Business Plan Competition

Project **ECHO** 2025

Thank you for your role in today's event!

CSU, Dominguez Hills

Teachers

Parents

Students

Judges

From the Project ECHO Staff
Diane Quast, Matilda Albano,
Sara Mantich, and Shohini Banerjee

www.projectecho.org

