

# Katie McBee will try to inspire upcoming seniors in Riverbend CEO program

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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**ALTON - Katie McBee of Godfrey** loves not only the River Bend region, but the Alton-Godfrey communities in general and wants to make a difference.

McBee graduated from Alton High School in 2007 and earned her bachelor's degree as a teacher at Greenville College. She taught for two years and once she had a son she

started working at Marquette Catholic. She was a much in demand tutor for the school and the Marquette counselor encouraged her to apply for the facilitator of the Riverbend CEO program.

The RiverBend Growth Association was the founder of the program. The RBGA's Riverbend Development Foundation is the fiscal agent of the CEO program.

"We invited our area superintendents to a meeting and presented the CEO program and Alton jumped on it and invited Marquette," Monica Bristow, executive director of the RiverBend Growth Association, said.

"It is an awesome economic development program for the future. One of the things we are looking forward to is educating students and their parents about what goes on in the River Bend, what things are made and what services are given. They will know what goes on in those buildings and what kinds of jobs are there."

The program is done in conjunction with Alton High School and Marquette Catholic. The program stems from work of Craig Lindvahl, executive director of Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship. He is a nationally recognized educator and filmmaker with more than 30 years of teaching. His television work is regularly shown on PBS stations around the country.

Twenty-two high school seniors will enter the Riverbend CEO program this fall.

"I am very excited about the program," McBee said. "Since I was picked as facilitator I have learned a lot about the program. It is funded by an investor board in the community. There are no school funds with the project and we meet on community property."

McBee said the program will initially meet in the fall in the RiverBender.com Building around the conference table, then move to some other locations the rest of the year.

"We will begin by each writing a business plan in the fall," she said. "They will plan and develop the business funding. By spring, they will launch their own business marking product or service. I think one of the questions you have to ask the applicants of the program is: Do you have any ideas for a business?"

McBee stressed the key for those who are selected for the program is that they have a good work ethic and drive and self-motivation to be successful.

The Midland Institute offers guidance in securing investors, comprehensive training, a CEO manual that provides a blueprint for success, a CEO teacher manual that provides

insight, ongoing training and mentoring for the CEO instructor, ongoing support for the CEO board and much more.

Each student is assigned a mentor in the community to partner with and answer questions.

McBee said the community mentors are invaluable to the students as a resource. “This gives them a leg up in the process,” she said. “My ultimate hope is they will find what they are passionate about and make that passion their careers.”

The students will tour several facilities throughout the River Bend community. The business hosts will change each quarter. She guesses there will be over 60 guest speakers come in and work with the students.

“The speakers will share their expertise and business history with the students,” she said.

McBee said she is proud to make the River Bend here home and is glad she is able to now make a difference inspiring these younger people to bigger and better things in life.

“I always knew my life was here and this is where I want to raise my family and continue to make my home,” she said. “I think this is a perfect opportunity for me.”