



Riverbend CEO Program: creates entrepreneurial opportunities

by Steven Spencer, Staff Writer
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ALTON - Area high school seniors got to work recently at the Riverbender.com Community Center to start developing their



own businesses with the Riverbend CEO Program.

Program Facilitator, Katie McBee, said the program is made possible by business in the community who have pledge money to help students from Alton High, Marquette Catholic and East Alton-Wood River pursue entrepreneurial dreams of their own.

"The end goal is that the students are going to be starting their own business," McBee said. "Which is very exciting and impressive. So to do that, my job is to line up between 50 and 60 guest speaker and facility tours of local businesses to help us get the best business information presented to these students."

With the information they gain the students will create a business as a class as well as individually. The money from class business will be portioned out as seed money for the individual businesses which will then be presented at a trade show in April at the Best Western Premier in Alton.

McBee said one of the most beneficial aspects of the Riverbend CEO Program is the opportunity to network with local business owners.

"Each student will be assigned a mentor from the business community," McBee said. "That will be happening the end of September, we'll have our mentor match up day. They get to meet all the different mentors and then the mentors and the students both pick their top five and we're able to pair everybody together. It's huge."



The opportunity to work with their mentors gives the student's not only a second set of eyes but information and resources to find help that the mentors themselves might not be able to provide.

Last year's program resulted with new businesses such as Nasello's Errand and Delivery Service, Northern Point and Girly Girlz Boutique.

The classes will be held from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. every school day at the Riverbender.com Community Center for the first quarter and with an open door classroom policy McBee said anyone is welcome to come and see what the program is all about.

More information about Riverbend CEO can be found [Facebook](#).

