



IdeaBounce Recap and Business Canvas Workshop

November 18 2019 10:47 AM



(Alton, IL – 11/13/2020) On November 7th, an IdeaBounce® pitch competition was held in Alton which brought together people who had an idea brewing in order to gain support. Inventors, startups, charities and creatives from across the region were able to share a 2-minute version of their concept with a supportive audience and network to make connections on how to move forward. Originally, the coordinators of the event had pledged \$1,000 in prize money to be awarded by a panel of judges, but the

presenters received a pleasant surprise when the awards were increased more than eight-fold by the Simmons Family Foundation.

Local attorney and philanthropist John Simmons was in the IdeaBounce audience and during the judging process decided on the spot to help accelerate all of the ideas that were pitched in order to help propel them forward. “I was blown away by the creativity and enthusiasm displayed at the IdeaBounce,” said John Simmons. “After hearing the pitches and aspirations of the applicants, it just felt like the right thing to do to expand the prize money and give all of the presenters a shot at realizing their dreams. As we all work together to revitalize our community, we need big thinkers and doers like I saw Thursday night to make things happen.”

A wide variety of concepts were pitched at the event. Presentations that were awarded \$1,000 prizes included: an expansion of the Junior League Locker program to provide new clothing, shoes and coats to children in need at Alton schools, a concept for an open play space for young children and their caretakers, A-town Mowtown – a project of Alton Lawn Company which would provide a starter kit to youth who would like to launch their own lawn care businesses, Moon Drops + Wellness which is an innovative CBD shop that will be opening soon in Alton, and RiverBend Mushroom Co. which is an aspiring a gourmet mushroom farm.

Presentations that were awarded \$500 prizes included: an artisan frozen custard shop, an invention of a customizable piece of holiday décor featuring family memorabilia, a large-scale iconic piece of public art to symbolize Alton and draw visitors to the area, a concept to interpret and amplify all of Alton’s environmental and nature-based assets into a central location, SALT (Student Athletes Leading Tomorrow) - a sports-based youth development organization, a jewelry-maker who would like to explore sustainable precious metal techniques, and a textile art project that aims to create a piece of “yarn-boming” knit and crochet installation that would envelope an entire building.

Alton Main Street, the Skandalaris Center at Washington University in St. Louis, and Alton RISING (Riverbend Incubator for Startups, Innovation, and New Growth) teamed up to present this fun, fast paced event at the Simmons Hanly Conroy law firm.

“This is a natural extension of the advocacy and support that our organization has been providing for new and existing small businesses and our creative community members for decades,” said Sara McGibany, Executive Director of Alton Main Street. The organization and its partners are available to help entrepreneurs and small businesses navigate any obstacles they may face. “Our goal is to provide guidance, resources and information.” said Penny Schmidt who serves on the Economic Vitality Committee for Alton Main Street, “Providing entrepreneurs and creatives with access to this high-quality expertise enables them, and Alton, to flourish.”

To take great ideas to the next level, entrepreneurs are encouraged to attend a free one-hour workshop to learn about the power of the Business Canvas. Join Mary Louise Helbig, Executive Director of ITEN (IT Entrepreneur Network in St. Louis) for an overview of the key areas of a business model canvas and its more streamlined cousin, the lean canvas. Learn how these powerful one-page tools can be used to give you a framework to test your assumptions, leading to a more efficient business decision-making and planning. The event will take place at AltonWorks headquarters, located at 601 E. Broadway in Alton. Only 25 seats are available, please register at this link to sign up: <https://forms.gle/eDzP2BaRo2r3XBZR7>

Alton is fertile ground for entrepreneurs to grow and thrive. For many communities like Alton, fostering startups and small business growth has been the key to transitioning from a formerly manufacturing-based economy. The concept of fostering entrepreneurship to accelerate urban revitalization has been embraced by a wide spectrum of supporters, from artists and cultural organizations to business leaders and financial institutions.

The event is presented by Alton Main Street, with support from ITEN, Alton RISING, Simmons Hanly Conroy, Mathis, Marifian & Richter, LTD., the City of Alton, the Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Bureau, Riverbender.com, The Telegraph, AdVantage, and WBGZ Radio.