



Positive Program Helps Students Build Their Own Business

In the very near future, Buffalo Public Schools student Patrick Anhalt is seriously considering opening his own business: selling corn snakes.

Believe it or not, there's a big demand in the farming community to use corn snakes to keep critters like mice and other animals from eating valuable crops.

While the Emerson student wants to keep mice away from farmers' fields, he can certainly thank the MICE Foundation for planting the seeds of how to start and operate a successful business.

"I want to be my own business owner," said Anhalt. In the long term, the 18-year-old junior at Emerson High School would like to translate his culinary skills into opening his own restaurant.

The MICE Foundation, short for the Meszaros International Center for Entrepreneurship sponsors a popular business program for Juniors and Seniors from school districts across Western New York.

Funded by a grant from the Oishei Foundation, students from urban, suburban, and rural districts spend Saturday mornings learning extensive business lessons, including ethical entrepreneurship training.

The MICE Foundation itself was created by Mr. Laszlo (Les) Meszaros in a partnership with the School of Management of the State University of New York at Buffalo. Mr. Meszaros, chairman of the foundation, owned and operated several successful local high-tech companies, and served as Vice-President of Business Development with Intel Corp. The program was developed by Professor Joseph Salamone, a thirty year veteran with UB and now partner in the MICE foundation.

Students attend classes at Jacobs Hall at U.B.'s North Campus. More than 50 students from across the area participate every Saturday.

Students are asked for a minimal monetary payment to cover tuition and class costs, but thanks to Oishei Foundation, no child is ever turned away because of financial hardship.

The MICE foundation's ETP (ethical Entrepreneurship Training Program) has been organized and run by business professionals who know the need of educating young people with the goal of keeping them and their expanded business skills in Western New York.

"We need to keep our students local and stop the so called "brain drain." It's my mission and dream to give young adults the tools to start their own businesses which in turn will boost local economic growth. These are some of the benefits that the MICE Foundation offers the local economy," said Meszaros.

"Young people have the greatest potential and opportunity to develop positive attitudes and business behaviors. Entrepreneur skills can be easily translated to daily life. The training helps young people develop effective work behaviors, personal management talents, and critical thinking skills: all these abilities help an individual become a high quality human asset," said Salamone.

This year's Entrepreneurship Training Program started in October, 2007 and will continue until graduation March 8, 2008.

Buffalo Schools Superintendent Dr. James A. Williams visited Buffalo Public Schools students during the first week of classes in October of 2007.

"I was impressed with the structure of this program and delighted to see so many students up very early in the morning to expand their education. Students are busy. And it's a wonderful testament to our District that so many children wake up early on a Saturday and enthusiastically come to this program," said Dr. Williams.

As for Anhalt, the Emerson student, he is confident the valuable lessons learned every Saturday morning through the MICE Foundation will help him start that business, and keep it right here in Western New York.

"This program is a tremendous opportunity for me to be able to build a business. I don't want to leave my family in Buffalo. Hopefully completion of the ETP experience will keep me here in Western New York," added Anhalt.

Students interested in participating next year may download an application at the link below.