

Winners of almost \$80,000 in cash and scholarships awarded Saturday evening by Visioning a Great Racine's Tech-Prize competition included 13-year-old Racine Real School student and a Chicago entrepreneur who wants to change the landscape for women's health.

Two Saturday events were the culmination of the Tech-Prize competition. Awards were presented at the main stage on Monument Square immediately following Party on the Pavement.

Saturday morning 10 entrepreneurs pitched their business proposals to investors and judges at Gateway Technical College's Racine campus.

The winner, Eden Laurin of Chicago, won the top \$5,000 prize for NYSSA, a company she started with two other women who felt "marginalized by the design" of clothing and products for women after pregnancy.

During what she called "the 4th Trimester", Laurin said she felt let down by the medical community. There were no products or clothing designed to help women heal after childbirth, she said: "Women were just told to grin and bear it."

Launched in 2018, NYSSA's first products were clothing with integrated pockets for heat or cold packs. Their newest product is a mirror that allows women to easily do self-examinations. One of their products will be included in 1,100 CVS stores soon as the pharmacy launches a women's wellbeing section Laurin said.

Pitch competitor Harry Giovanni won \$2,500 for his radiant panel technology which uses nanotech resistant ink to create energy efficient, easy-to-install radiant heating systems.

Hua Wang flew from Washington DC to pitch SmartBridge, which helps find information and medical specialists for those with cancer. She won the \$1000 third prize. Hua also attended Tech-Prize workshops Friday afternoon presented by George Vukotich, UW Parkside director for Research in Innovation and Smart Cities. She said ideas from his workshops alone were worth the trip.

A Carthage senior, Liv Higgins, won \$750 as the fan favorite in the Pitch competition. Attendees voted on the Tech-Prize app.

Also concluding Saturday was an Idea Competition. Tech-Prize co-chair Jeff Daniel said that competition was geared to ideas that weren't fully developed and ready to be pitched to investors. Participants included local grade and high school students.

Ideas were on display at downtown stores throughout last week, and the public could vote for their favorite idea on the Tech-Prize app. Judges reviewed the ideas Saturday afternoon.

The top \$1,000 prize in the youth competition went to Malea Pina, a 13-year-old Real School student who proposed an app that would allow students to find peer to peer help with homework questions. Excited about her prize, Pina said she wants to work with the University of Wisconsin-Parkside App Factory to make the app a reality

Achyut Krishnan and Ethan Ferguson, graduates of Case High School and current students at UW Madison, won the \$5000 top prize for the Idea Competition. They came up with their idea for a system that automatically notifies authorities or others that help is needed in an emergency. At the conclusion of the event, Achyut commented "It sure was a long journey from initially joining the competition to now, but it was more than worth it and we sure have learned a lot!"

Beginning the Tech-Prize competition week Sept. 10-11, the group hosted a Code-a-Thon that awarded \$28,000 in Gateway and Parkside Scholarships to contestants who created a web-based solution to the problem of Food Deserts inside cities.

Robert Ducoffe, Parkside Provost-Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, presented Parkside scholarships and Jennifer Charpentier, Executive Director of the Gateway Technical College Foundation presented two \$2,000 Gateway scholarships for excellence in coding.

In May Tech-Prize hosted an App competition that drew contestants from as far away as India. Tech-Prize partners Gateway and Parkside awarded up to \$30,000 in scholarships to winners.

The Tech-Prize competition was the culmination of over two years work by a dedicated group of volunteers who made up the Visioning a Greater Racine's Thriving Economy WAVE team.

Citing Racine's history as "invention city", the group modeled Tech-Prize after Grand Rapid Michigan's Art Prize, which brings artists from around the world to compete for public and juried prizes.

Tech-Prize co-chair Jeff Daniel noted the challenge of putting the competition together during COVID. "I don't think we could have done any better; it was phenomenal," he said.

Tony Bigonia, owner of downtown Racine's Uncorkt, hosted virtual weekly meetings by the Tech-Prize group throughout COVID. He said this year's competition would be the basis for a larger event next year. "Lessons learned will bring success," he said.

Racine Transit Manager Trevor Jung, told the crowd at the Saturday awards ceremony there were many things Racine could point to with pride, but "one of the things we celebrate the most is our spirit of innovation."

Daniel and Bigonia provided this summary of Tech-Prize's accomplishments.

The following are the Summary Highlights for the first year:

- 4 competitions were completed in 2021.
- \$80k in cash and scholarship prizes were awarded to outstanding participants that created great ideas.
- 22 specific educational series were developed, taught and recorded (many in Spanish as well). These are the “Special Sauce” classes you don’t get in formal school settings. All of exceptional quality covering everything from idea generation and IP protection, to financial analysis, access to capital, and Investor relations with VC’s, Angels and others.
- Multiple listening/discussion sessions have been completed with leadership individuals in the areas of responsibility including, CIVIC, Education, Philanthropic and Business. We have the support and engagement of the Elementary, High Schools, as well as all three colleges within the community. The team is gaining a much better understanding of how we can work together to innovate our future.

Competitions Completed:

1. App Development Competition
2. Code-A-Thon
3. Idea Competition
4. Pitch Competition

The full winner list is below, but the highlights for local participation include:

- 1 current winner from RUSD for the Idea Competition
- 2 current winners that graduated from RUSD and are now at UW Madison, and 1 Carthage College Student
- The Code-a-thon had all local winners and benefit
- 1 local group winner for the App Development competition – 2 international winners are now attending classes at Gateway and UWP
- There are now multiple opportunities for local business to work with these creators to enable results and then seek future jobs right here in our community.

The full list of award winners include:

Pitch Competition Winners:

- 1st Place \$5,000.00 – Nysacare (Product) - Team member from Chicago. Product to support the lifelong needs of Women.
- 2nd Place \$2,500.00 – Radiant Panel Technology (Products) – Team from Chicago area and focused on manufacturing sector and transportation sector. Infrared Heating system that is 60% more efficient than the forced air heating we all use today.
- 3rd Place \$1,000.00 – Smart Bridge Health (App) – Chicago and DC based - App to assist with Cancer Treatment and to improve the outcomes, 2nd opinion analysis.

- Fan Favorite \$750.00 – Greater Than (Program) Designed to support the mental health needs of teenagers– Carthage Student.

Idea Competition Winners - College and Open:

- 1st Place - \$5,000.00 – Smart Zen Tech – Team from Racine – App linking a suite of safety products to emergency response (ie – pepper spray). Need local manufacturing and support
- 2nd Place - \$2,500.00 – Altruize – Team from Beloit area – App that tracks volunteer work for those requiring. It is your data and with you forever. Need local support for launch
- 3rd Place - \$1,000.00 – Enactus – UW Whitewater team – App and business process that solves vision treatment challenges in remote regions, while providing jobs for those doing the analysis through the App. Need local help launching

Idea Competition Winners – Youth:

- 1st Place - \$1,000.00 – Mallea Pina and Homework Help – RUSD 8th grader – App to provide homework assistance connectivity if a circumstance arises where the student does not have access to a person that can help them
- 2nd Place - \$750.00 – Krishna Raghavendram – Chennai, India – App for health management – Krishna always was a winner of the App Dev competition this spring and is attending classes at Gateway virtually.

-

Code-A-Thon Winners: Scholarship winners – These are all local individuals

Team Winners - UWP Scholarships

Purple

- | | | |
|-----|----------|---------------------|
| 1st | team | Ajay Gomez |
| | \$1000*4 | Benjamin Hunter |
| | \$1000*4 | Antoine Williams El |
| | \$1000*4 | Macy Flanagan |

Blue

- | | | |
|-----|---------|------------------|
| 2nd | Team | Christian Bass |
| | \$750*4 | Claire Krug |
| | \$750*4 | Teresa Fernandez |
| | \$750*4 | Francisco Munoz |

Excellence in Coding: Gateway Scholarships

- | | |
|--------|---------------------|
| \$2000 | Antoine Williams El |
| \$2000 | Claire Krug |

