

Pinawa student entrepreneurs pitch ideas

By Arlene Davidson

Pinawa Secondary School hosted a Youth Entrepreneurship and Start-Up Workshop on Oct. 6, led by representatives from North Forge (NF) in Winnipeg and North Forge East (NFE) in Pinawa. This full-day event was designed for students in Grades 10 to 12 and covered topics of business planning including ideation, market validation, branding and marketing, revenue and financial modelling.

The workshop facilitators included Jeff Ryzner, president of NF, Stuart Henrickson, chair of NF and head of corporate and commercial banking Manitoba (HSBC), Joelle Foster, director of Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nunavut, Futurpreneur Canada, Suzanne Braun, founder and managing director of Relish New Brand Experience and Shane Li, president of NFE.

Tim Stefanishyn, superintendant of the Whiteshell School Division, Pinawa Mayor Blair Skinner, Scott Smith, principal and Dono-

van McKay, vice-principal were also in attendance at the event.

A total of 12 students participated in the workshop with four teams, each comprised of three members. The students had to come up with a business plan based on the information they learned during the presentations then pitch their ideas to a panel of judges consisting of Stuart Henrickson, Joelle Foster and Pinawa businessman Chris Saunders.

Liam Swaenepoel, Adam Kerr and Deion Thomas pitched an idea for a new app that would help people locate lost ear buds.

Lyle Neufeld, Aiden Hughes and Ryan Miller proposed a company that made and sold shoes online.

Stephen Wakeman, Autumn Thompson and Chloe Wilcox devised an app that would help patients access medical services.

Danika Cadotte, Sophie Long and Heather Neufeld designed a system to help budding writers navigate



Photo by Arlene Davidson

Stephen Wakeman (left), Autumn Thompson and Chloe Wilcox pitched an idea for an app that would help patients access medical services at a Youth Entrepreneurship workshop in Pinawa.

the steps to take a completed manuscript through to publication.

Prior to the student pre-

sentations, Foster noted she found it interesting to see that the girls in the session focused more on social enterprise in comparison to the boys, who directed their ideas to sports and clothing.

“You don’t see this difference so much in the city where pitches are more gender neutral,” said Foster. “We have to blur the line

and encourage the guys to think more about social enterprise and stimulate the girls to take an interest in less social ideas.”

Li reported the winning team of Cadotte, Neufeld and Long were presented with an invitation to join the NFE Start-Up program and will receive six months of free service from the local

agency.

Li extended his gratitude to Stefanishyn who worked very closely with NFE to organize and coordinate this event, and to the staff of Pinawa Secondary School for being the first in the region to host a Youth Entrepreneurship and Start-up Workshop through North Forge East.

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