Funds on the line at PitchNOLA: Community Solutions

January 14, 2016

Ten semifinalists will be pitching their ideas for solutions to community issues at Tulane University during PitchNOLA 2016: Community Solutions, to be held on Jan. 28.



A presenter pitches for her project at last year’s PitchNOLA event. This year, 10 New Orleanians will be competing on Jan. 28 for funding for their solutions to challenges in the New Orleans community. (Photo by Guillermo Cabrera-Rojo)

The Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Tulane's A. B. Freeman School of Business and Propeller, a nonprofit that incubates and launches socially minded ventures, announced the semifinalists. The pitch competition is for New

Orleanians to propose their solutions to local challenges in workforce development, children and families, social justice and the environment.

The semifinalists will compete for a total of $10,000 in seed funding provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The competition will take place from 6 until 8 p.m. on Jan. 28 at the Freeman Auditorium in the Woldenberg Art Center. Tickets are free (with a suggested $5 donation to fund the Audience Favorite Award) on Eventbrite.

Among those pitching their ideas will be former Tulane student Haley Burns, who founded the organization Fund 17, which provides financial and educational tools to underserved entrepreneurs in 17 different wards across the city; and student Lilith Winkler-Schor of Roots of Renewal, which provides work training for recently released[a] young adults who renovate blighted properties.

The eight other semifinalists (read about their projects here) offer services for the homeless population and for foster care youth, job training in various sectors, and ideas from a food cooperative to an arts education space. They are Blessing Micro Shelter (Haiyan Khan); Dishroom Heroes (Jeff Gulotta); Food Justice Collaborative (Chika Kondo); Groundwork New Orleans: Green Grounds Krewe (Alicia Neal); IDIYA Labs (Domenic Giunta and Andrew Winstead); Project 18 (Sonya Brown & Bonnie DeSalle); Upturn Arts (Dana Reed); and Young Creative Agency (Alberta Wright).

Prizes will be awarded by a panel of judges including Leslie Jacobs, CEO of the New Orleans Startup Fund; Peter Ricchiuti, professor of practice at the A. B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane; and Carmen James, vice president of programs at the Greater New Orleans Foundation.