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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PALM BEACH COUNTY LEADING THE COUNTRY IN YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

*Local students place 2<sup>nd</sup> in National Competition. Third year PBC represented in top three.*



**PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL**—Winners from the Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) National Saunders Scholarship Competition were announced on June 13<sup>th</sup> at the U.S. Chamber’s America’s Small Business Summit.

Seven national finalists convened on June 13 to pitch their business ideas and compete for college scholarships. The finalists were selected out of more than 2,000 middle and high school students nationwide who participated in YEA!’s ground breaking 30-week entrepreneurship course in which they generated business ideas, met with legendary entrepreneurs, wrote business plans, pitched a panel of real “investors”, got start-up funding and launched their own businesses.

At the National Competition in Washington, DC, three student businesses came out on top, winning college scholarships with a grand prize of \$30,000 to the Saunders College of Business at the Rochester Institute of Technology along with business start-up

packages from Toshiba and BlueTie.

Ethan Shapiro and Ryan Shnider, of the Central Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce YEA! class, pitched their company, Snap’d In, a customizable and changeable cell phone case which allows teens to change their case to reflect new interest and hobbies. Shapiro is a high school freshman at American Heritage School, and Shnider is a high school freshman at Palm Beach Central High School. The boys placed second in nation, a huge honor, one judge even describing their presentation as “smoother than a fresh jar of Skippy peanut butter”.

To view the promotional video for Snap’d In, click the link below:

<https://www.facebook.com/yeausa/videos/10154060796716886/>

To view the award winning pitch, click the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nw9HufsNSJ4&feature=youtu.be>

In the past two years, Palm Beach County students have placed 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> at the national competition, with an additional 1<sup>st</sup> place finish in 2012, for a remarkable total of 4 top national contenders since the program’s inception in 2004. Perhaps there is something in the water here, as Palm Beach County is clearly leading the way in youth entrepreneurship. “Sam’s Club is proud to support YEA! finalists as they embark on business ownership,” said Sharonda Britton, Sam’s

Club Sr. Director, Strategic Alliance and Member Services. “These students embody the entrepreneurial spirit and business know-how of our founder Sam Walton.”

The national champions attending the U.S. Chamber’s America’s Small Business Summit had access to hundreds of small business owners from across the country who shared management advice, policy insights, and strategies to grow their businesses. Featured speakers included Marcus Lemonis, from CNBC’s The Profit, and Kat Cole, from Group President of Focus Brands which includes Cinnabon, Carvel, Auntie Anne’s, and Moe’s among others.

The Central Palm Beach County Chamber is now accepting applications for the upcoming 2016-2017 YEA! Program. Any applications received by July 1<sup>st</sup> will have the \$35 application fee waved. For information about how to get involved, or to have a student you know apply, visit [www.cpbchamberyea.org](http://www.cpbchamberyea.org).

This program would not be possible without the support of our local sponsors:

**Presenting Sponsors:** FPL and the School District of Palm Beach County

**Corporate Sponsors:** Bethesda Hospital West, Mall at Wellington Green, My Brother’s/Sister’s Keeper Charitable Trust, Tripp Electric Motors, Inc., United Franchise Group, and Wellington Regional Medical Center

**University Sponsors:** Keiser University Flagship Campus and Palm Beach Atlantic University

**Community Partners:** Banyan Printing, Chelle J Photography, Inc., Floridian Community Bank, Think Big Health Care Solutions, and United Way of Palm Beach County

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### **The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!)**

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) is a groundbreaking and exciting year long class that transforms middle and high school students into real, confident entrepreneurs. Throughout the class, students develop business ideas, write business plans, conduct market research, pitch their plans to a panel of investors, and actually launch and run their own real, legal, fully formed companies and social movements. Founded in 2004 at the University of Rochester with support from the Kauffman Foundation, the Young Entrepreneurs Academy today serves thousands of students in communities across America. For more information, please call 561.790.6200 or visit [www.cpbchamberyea.org](http://www.cpbchamberyea.org)

### **About the Central Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce**

The geographic footprint of the Chamber extends from the sugar cane fields near Lake Okeechobee to the coral reefs of the Atlantic Ocean, encompassing 15 municipalities and serving a population of more than 490,000 residents, roughly 36% of the population of Palm Beach County. The communities located within the chamber’s footprint are: Acreage, Atlantis, Belle Glade, Greenacres, Lake Clarke Shores, Lake Worth, Lantana, Loxahatchee, Loxahatchee Groves, Manalapan, Palm Springs, Royal Palm Beach, South Palm Beach, Wellington and West Palm Beach. Visit [www.cpbchamber.com](http://www.cpbchamber.com).