

SADDLEBACK COLLEGE

LARIAT

Winners of Orange County Entrepreneurship Competition Announced

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The finals of the Orange County Social Entrepreneurship Competition were held at University of California, Irvine on Saturday, May 10.

Winning the \$10,000 first place prize was Prakash Bista with his Modern Model Residential School for impoverished areas in Nepal. The second place winner was Adam Comenzuli featuring Karibu Solar Power that aimed to make high quality solar power affordable for consumers and businesses. Coming in at third place was Justine Porter featuring Della, a socially responsible fashion-line with the goal of empowering women in Ghana, West Africa by providing them with employment and educational opportunities.

The winner of the People's Choice Award was Joe Palacios for his K9 West Kennels project. The goal of K9 West is to alleviate some of the negative impacts of post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries on the veteran community while simultaneously reducing population in animal shelters.

Other contestants included Robert Charles, Mahour Lellat-Parast, Taylor Cheeley, Anna Sontag, Shawn Wehan, Sophia Lin and Emily Quinlan.

Shawn Wehan, the founder of Givsum, an online application designed to increase the efficiency of charities, said his inspiration for creating Givsum was drawn from his own personal experiences volunteering at charities.

"When you do a lot of volunteering in the community, you discover there are great inefficiencies in charities and Givsum can help solve those problems," Wehan said. "Hopefully, Givsum will spread across the US and possibly internationally."

Taylor Cheeley, the Team Leader of Entourage Red, helped develop a Daily Health Indicator system that could potentially reduce the rate of unplanned pregnancies, the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases, date rape drug assaults on women and noncombat casualties among female troops in the military.

“Women have so many concerns regarding health,” Cheeley said. “Our DHI is a preventative product that can help woman domestically, and in developing countries.”

Cheeley listed helping women prevent STD’s, unwanted pregnancies and involuntary drug ingestion as the sources for her inspiration for competing in the Orange County Social Entrepreneurship Competition.

Robert Charles, the founder of Back to Native Orange County, started the program to replant areas by removing the foreign plants with higher water consumption and replacing them with native Southern-Californian plants that consume less water. The end result would be gardens with greatly reduced water consumption.

“I am interested in preserving nature, conserving water, and achieving these goals by a company that takes focuses on landscaping using native plants,” Charles said. “I wanted to give back to nature because I saw its beauty in my time in the Boy Scouts. I wanted others to see it as well.”

Charles also drew his inspiration from one of his professors at UCI and a friend from his church.

“I was inspired to conserve water after hearing about the research of UCI professor Dr. Feldman. He studies the need for water conservation in California,” Charles said. “Also, I met Judith Gielow years ago, and she first introduced me to native gardens and showed me the benefits they created.”

Charles is also passionate about helping the veteran community and his program is aimed at providing veterans with work after their service.

“Having seen friends go off to the military and return without a clear career path,” Charles said. “I wanted to offer military veterans a career opportunity.”