



SANTA ROSA COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

SHANNON OGLETREE, CEcD
Economic Development Director
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6491 Caroline Street | Suite 4 | Milton, Florida 32570

MEMORANDUM

TO: Tony Gomillion, County Administrator

FROM: Shannon Ogletree, CEcD, Director

DATE: September 12, 2016

SUBJECT: Discussion of request for funding for the Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!)

RECOMMENDATION

Request to use \$10,000 from the electric franchise fee to support the Young Entrepreneurs Academy at Pace High School.

BACKGROUND

The YEA! program is a career academy being offered at Pace High School and is critical in the development of the entrepreneurial spirit in our upcoming workforce. This is the second year the academy is being offered.

YEA! takes students through the process of starting and running their own real businesses over the course of the school year. Students work with local professionals to develop business plans, create their websites and market their businesses. Students then pitch their ideas to a panel of investors comprised of local business and community leaders with real dollars at stake, to obtain funding and take all the steps necessary to actually launch their businesses.

The requested sponsorship will be used to offset costs associated with the running of the program.

September 7, 2016

Shannon Ogletree
Santa Rosa Economic Development
6491 Caroline Street #4
Milton, Florida 32570

RE: Young Entrepreneurs Academy Sponsorship

Dear Shannon,

As we've discussed on many occasions, for Santa Rosa County to prosper, developing the entrepreneurial spirit in our young people is critical. The development of 21st Century skills, innovation and business creation are the keys to the success of our economy; therefore nothing could be more important than instilling the entrepreneurial mindset in our youth. I know you work every day to create jobs, drive our economy and give-back to improve the community in which we live. I know that you also take an active interest in the lives of young people in our community. We have worked collaboratively many times to provide our youth with useful tools and to teach them critical skills that will help them to succeed and thrive as productive adults. Because their success is vital to our community's, I believe that entrepreneurship education is a critical need for our students.

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) at Pace High School takes students through the process of starting and running real businesses over the course of a full academic year. YEA! students, as a class, visit area businesses, meet successful entrepreneurs, meet with professionals (attorneys, accountants, bankers, graphic designers, web developers, insurance providers, etc.), develop a business or social movement idea and plan, and work with mentors. Students then pitch their ideas "live" to a panel of investors made up of local business and community leaders with real dollars at stake to obtain funding—think *Shark Tank!*—, and take all of the steps necessary to, and then actually do, launch their venture.

Community support strengthens the program, and the academy strengthens the community. Students participating in the YEA! program learn important life lessons and at the same time gain an appreciation that the skills they are learning in school have significant value in "real world" applications. YEA! students gain self-esteem, confidence and practical experience in working through novel situations and challenges. By the end of the year, students have the opportunity to own and operate fully functioning businesses. Students learn to make a job-- not just take a job!

Santa Rosa School District has committed the human resources to make this program a reality. YEA! was made available as an elective opportunity to Pace High School students in the fall of 2015. We have just begun our second year with an amazing crop of budding entrepreneurs.

My role as program manager includes the overall management of the program including people resources. I serve in coordinating the involvement of business professionals as guest speakers, mentors, field trip hosts and judges for the big competition. Santa Rosa School District also provides the classroom and computer lab at Pace High School on a daily basis as well as the event space for the five signature events including a student & parent orientation, the BIG Investor Panel Event, the CEO Roundtable, The Trade Show and graduation.

I am requesting support of this initiative by the Board of County Commissioners at a donation level of \$10,000. This sponsorship will go to offset costs associated with the running of the program. I hope that this is something that you are excited about and interested in moving forward on together. I am available at your convenience if you would like to discuss any details.

Sincerely,



Charlin Knight

Director of Workforce Education ♦ Santa Rosa District Schools
Program Manager ♦ Pace High Young Entrepreneurs Academy