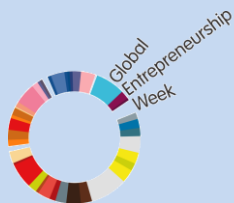


# Global Entrepreneurship Week 2011 recognized in DeKalb County



## **GEW-USA 2011** *Unleashing Ideas*

### **'Advocacy for Entrepreneurship Education in Schools - Making school more relevant for real life'**

#### **SUMMARY**

#### **Public Educational Forum on**

#### **'Advocacy for Entrepreneurship Education in Middle and High Schools'**

**On Thursday November 17, 2011**

**At the Redan Recreation Center, Lithonia, GA**

IXOYE Global Entrepreneurship Network (IXGEN) a DeKalb County nonprofit organization marked Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) USA 2011 with a public forum on **'Advocacy for Entrepreneurship Education in Middle and High Schools - Making school more relevant for real life'**

The forum was held on Thursday November 17<sup>th</sup> at the Redan Recreation Center in Lithonia, and was chaired by DeKalb County 5<sup>th</sup> District Commissioner, Lee May. Community leaders from schools, banks, the GA House of Representatives, and local nonprofit organizations formed the panel of speakers. Also contributing to the discussions were two high school students Josh Grosh and Evan Peterson, who are participating in Entrepreneurship programs at the Lithonia High School and the Arabia Mountain High School respectively.

In her welcome remarks the Founder/President of IXGEN, Ms. Emmenette Mason, observed that the need for entrepreneurial education for young people has never been greater than in these days of economic uncertainty, when there are hardly any jobs, especially for inexperienced high-school graduates. Entrepreneurship education gives them additional options that could leverage them for long term sustainable self employment.

She also said that the purpose of the round table is to set in motion an advocacy for entrepreneurship education to be adopted as an integral and full course in the curricula of middle and high schools, not only in DeKalb County but throughout the state of Georgia.

IXGEN's vision is to see entrepreneurship education become a part of the general education of middle and high school students, so that they find school more relevant to real life. This should help them take more vested interest in their education, and give them the opportunity of acquiring information and skills that would give them better career options and better lives.

In speaking about GEW Ms. Mason said that it is an initiative to inspire young people to embrace innovation, imagination and creativity: to think big, turn their ideas into reality, and to make their mark. It is also to influence change makers to unleash new ideas for future economic growth. The theme of the

Week is 'Unleashing Ideas', and IXGEN purposed this forum to raise awareness to the importance and long term effect of teaching the youth new ways of thinking, working, and making decisions through entrepreneurship.

In a short video message by the US Secretary of State Mrs. Hilary Clinton, she reiterated that President Obama's administration is dedicated to boosting entrepreneurship both in the United States and in other countries, where talent is widespread but opportunity often is not, and that they are focusing greater attention on women and young people who are too often marginalized; who not only can, but must be important catalysts for progress. She pointed out that ensuring that everyone in society has an opportunity to make the most of their talents, and fulfill their God-given potential, is critical to widening economic prosperity as well as the security and stability that go with it.

Commissioner May in his opening remarks recalled that although he started out as an entrepreneur while in school, his education in middle and high school, and even in college did not prepare him for entrepreneurship. He attributed his business spirit to a God given talent that was already in him. He had a business in high school selling candy and when his business expanded he employed some of his friends. A lot of what he learned was by chance. He expressed his firm belief that the teaching of entrepreneurship in the schools could help in reducing school dropout rates, and increases academic success.

Speakers in the panel were Richard Miller a retired business owner who shared how at the early age of 7 he became an entrepreneur and started another business by the age of 15. He shared some of his experiences and encouraged the youth to make good use of every opportunity presented to them to become business owners. He warned that to be a successful entrepreneur one had to be in it for more than just money, as it is a God given talent. He also advised them to have faith in God, work hard, be creative and be disciplined.

Record producer Thomas Demeritte founder of the nonprofit Alternative Directions Music Industry Training (ADMIT), a program that teaches young people about the ever-changing music industry, and gives them a better perspective of the business and technical side of the music business, shared the P.L.E.D.G.E. ( People. Location. Education. Determination. Goals. Enjoyment.) which he said can be applied to any type of business.

Mrs. Carrie Dean-Levine the Career Tech Department Chair and Partners in Education Liaison at the Lithonia High School, and Ms. Erika Gates Co-Department Chair of the Small Business Development program and FBLA Advisor at Arabia Mountain High School both spoke passionately about their respective programs and how these programs provide learning environments that promote student growth in every aspect of their life. Their programs help the students to become high achievers, and this was demonstrated by the two students who gave impressive presentations on how entrepreneurship education is helping to shape them for the future. Students at Arabia Mountain High School are in the process of developing business plans that they will present to a panel and possibly get some money to start their businesses.

Ms. Joyious Cutno a Business Specialist for Wells Fargo Bank in the Lithonia area shared how she started her banking and finance career without going to college, but by having a deep passion for business, she chose a career that now affords her the opportunity to constantly be in contact with the public helping them to achieve Financial Accountability, Credit Worthiness, and essential elements of becoming an Entrepreneur.

Representative Dar'shun Kendricks, Esq., District 94 presented a Resolution from the GA House of Representatives recognizing Global Entrepreneurship Week for its dedicated efforts to promote entrepreneurship and uplift the futures of young people by educating them in entrepreneurial

opportunities. She commended Ms. Emmenette Mason Founder/President of IXOYE Global Entrepreneurship Network for initiating the forum.

Later in the program Ms. Kendricks recounted a day in her life as an entrepreneur, emphasizing that a business owner should expect to work far more hours than when on a job.

In concluding, the chairman observed that we have a generation now that is most creative than any other in history. However, the problem is in the application of that ingenuity – making it a reality. He advised students and anyone thinking of starting a business to start with their passion and figure out how to turn it into something profitable.

He reiterated that present generation has the opportunities but they have to work to make them become a reality. His final nugget to the audience was: “Success is where preparation meets opportunity” - potential entrepreneurs should be prepared if they expect to succeed.