



AMERICAN
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AWARD

Second annual American Entrepreneurship Award opens for entries

Opportunity for entrepreneurs in in the Bronx and Miami Dade County to receive a share of \$125,000 start-up funding for their ventures

January 30, 2017. The American Entrepreneurship Award (AEA), a program created and funded by the Libra Group to support American start-up businesses and entrepreneurs, announced today that it has begun accepting submissions for its second annual award. Entrepreneurs are once again encouraged to apply for the opportunity to receive vital business funding and ongoing coaching from experienced business leaders on how to grow their businesses effectively, including advice on how best to harness the power of technology and innovation within their business plans.

The AEA focuses on identifying promising entrepreneurs in the Bronx, New York, and Miami-Dade County, Florida, whose business plans exhibit sustainability, innovation and a positive impact on the local communities. Applications can be submitted at www.americanaward.com up to April 27, 2017, and winners will be announced in June 2017. Interested entrepreneurs can also take advantage of an array of training events slated for March and April, including business ideation, entrepreneurship legal clinics, and funding and marketing boot camps, to help improve their applications.

"As an international business, we've always felt a responsibility to give back to the communities in which we operate and to provide opportunity," said Jimmy Athanasopoulos, Head of Social Responsibility for the Libra Group. "This is a core value of our group and the AEA is emblematic of our continued commitment to this. I am extremely proud of the progress last year's winners have made and look forward to seeing the exciting ideas that this year's entrepreneurs come up with."

Launched with an initial \$500,000 commitment from Libra, the AEA provides winners with a share of \$125,000 in business start-up funding, as well as mentorship and business support services. The Group was inspired to create the award when it became a founding sponsor of the My Brother's Keeper Alliance (MBK Alliance), a non-profit organization launched by President Obama aimed at eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps for boys and young men of color. AEA supporters include Workshop in Business Opportunities, Hostos Community College, the New York City Department of Small Business Services, the University of Pennsylvania Law School, Miami Dade College and The Idea Center at Miami Dade College.

The award's panel of judges comprises a group of seasoned entrepreneurs including Daymond John, the founder of FUBU, Presidential Ambassador of Global Entrepreneurship and Co-star of ABC's Shark Tank.

The 2016 American Entrepreneurship Award winners from the Bronx were:

- Ginjan Bros (www.drinkginjan.com): brings to market traditional African beverages. Their first product offering is "Ginjan", a popular West African drink made with fresh ginger, cold-pressed pineapples, fresh lemons, vanilla, anise extracts, and organic cane sugar.
- Watt + Flux (www.wattandflux.com): upgrades existing energy-intensive lighting systems in businesses, schools and vessels to new lighting systems that save time, money and the environment.
- South Bronx Food Market (www.southbronxfarmersmarket.com): a market and café in the heart of the Mott Haven in The South Bronx, one of the city's most notorious food deserts. They offer a variety of affordable and locally sourced produce, pantry products, baked goods and prepared foods for both eating in café style as well as take-away.

"The South Bronx Food Market is committed to promoting access to nutritious, affordable, locally grown produce and related agricultural products for the under-served residents of the South Bronx," said Lily Kesselman, Founder of the South Bronx Food Market, at the time. "Libra's financial and logistical support will allow us to expand into new markets with the aim of combatting obesity, diabetes, and malnutrition."

The 2016 Miami-Dade County winners were:

- StatLab Mobile (www.statlabmobile.com): a complete mobile medical laboratory with the capabilities to test blood and urine samples on site at any location. Their goal is to provide quality blood testing for the insured and the uninsured at a fraction of the traditional cost.
- ValueDoc (www.doctors.valuedoc.com): a free online health and wellness marketplace where cash or self-pay patients find local, quality, pre-screened doctors offering basic services, like dental cleaning, cardiology consultations, MRI, urgent care visits, plastic surgery, physical therapy, acupuncture, skin consultation, etc., at discounted prices of up to 80% off retail.
- CourtBuddy (www.courtbuddy.com): an automated legal matchmaking system that pairs consumers and small businesses with solo attorneys for a-la-carte legal services based on an individual's budget.

"Winning the 2016 AEA was a game changer for Court Buddy," said James Jones, Jr, CEO of Court Buddy. "Being able to tap into this network has helped our founding team become better business owners and has helped Court Buddy scale exponentially to provide affordable and needed legal services to the residents of Miami-Dade County and beyond."

To learn more about the American Entrepreneurship Award, please visit www.americanaward.com.

- Ends -

Application Details and Eligibility

The American Entrepreneurship Award is open to entrepreneurs in two regions (the Bronx, New York and Miami-Dade County, Florida) whose business plans exhibit sustainability, innovation, and a positive impact on the local community while accruing revenue and creating jobs. Entries are encouraged from individuals or groups with no previous business experience, or from existing companies with an all-new business concept which is not related to their core activities and cannot be funded through existing resources.

The closing date for applications is April 27th 2017 and a list of finalists will be published on the American Entrepreneurship Award website by the end of May. During June 2017, the winners will be announced based on careful scrutiny of the merits of each application. Winning businesses will receive an interest-free loan that is a share of \$125,000.

Business support offered to winners includes legal, accounting, communications and IT consultancy services. Each winner will be assigned a mentor who will provide advice and guidance throughout every stage of the business start-up. The support and mentoring for winners will be provided by the Libra Group and other supporters of the program.

To learn more about and apply for the American Entrepreneurship Award, please visit www.americanaward.com.

About the American Entrepreneurship Award and Libra Group

The Libra Group is an international business group comprising 30 subsidiaries active in 35 countries across six continents. The group has principal operations in aviation, energy, finance and diversified, hospitality, real estate, and shipping. The American Entrepreneurship Award is managed by Libra Group's Social Responsibility division which undertakes numerous education, entrepreneurship and philanthropic initiatives globally. The Libra Group also funds and manages the Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award (www.hellenicaward.com), now in its fifth year of operation. The Libra Group is owned by the Logothetis family.

For more information, please visit: www.libra.com.