



AMERICAN
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AWARD

**WINNERS OF THE 2017 AMERICAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD
IN MIAMI ANNOUNCED**

- *Award program for start-up companies in Miami-Dade County names winners*
- *Organizers announce major increase in award funding to \$250,000 and declare five winners in Miami-Dade County*

Miami-Dade County, June 24, 2017: The American Entrepreneurship Award (AEA), a program created to support start-up businesses and entrepreneurs, has announced the winners of its second annual contest. The award focuses on traditionally under-resourced communities in the United States and this year operated exclusively in the Bronx, New York, and Miami-Dade County, Florida. The AEA's founding sponsors, the Libra Group, had originally pledged a prize of \$125,000 in business start-up funding to be split among the award regions. The quality of entrants was, however, so high that Libra raised prize funding to a total of \$250,000 with multiple award winners being declared in each region. Winners will also receive mentorship and a range of business support services.

The panel of judges selected winners from hundreds of entrants on the basis of business plans that exhibited sustainability, financial prudence and innovation, while accruing revenue and creating jobs predominantly in the Bronx, New York, or Miami-Dade County, Florida. Entries were accepted from individuals or groups with no previous business experience, or from existing companies with an all-new business idea that was not related to their core activities.

The AEA was launched in October 2015 with an initial commitment from the Libra Group, a privately owned diversified business group with 30 subsidiaries active across six continents. The winners' trophies for the Miami-Dade County were presented at a ceremony at Tuyo Restaurant, the Miami Culinary Institute on June 23, 2017.

Winning companies in Miami-Dade County are:

1. **Major Marketplace** - an online marketplace for minority businesses and those who want to support them. The company curates local and international products and services made and offered by passionate creators, bridging conscious buyers to minority businesses. www.majoritymarketplace.com
2. **PIERCE Plan** - a Software as a Service (SaaS) platform that automatically tracks academic requirements in real time so high school student-athletes are eligible for

scholarships to play college sports, prepared to compete in the classroom, and positioned to succeed in life. www.gotpierce.com

3. **SOP Technologies** - provides cities with innovative solutions to manage and protect the environment. The company's mission is to Stop Ocean Pollution (SOP) and it works towards this goal by developing cost-effective physical and digital technologies to prevent trash and contaminants from entering waterways. www.soptechint.com
4. **MyRA** - an on-demand healthcare-staffing platform that serves as a conduit for healthcare facilities and healthcare professionals to directly connect, in order to service their scheduling and staffing needs.
5. **UX Gofer** - a user research platform that empowers start-ups and enterprises to create innovative experiences for their customers and make better design decisions by incorporating live user feedback through our guided usability tests. www.uxgofer.com

In addition to the \$25,000 in funding, which comes in the form of an interest-free loan, each winner will receive business support spanning legal, accounting, communications and IT consultancy services. They will also be assigned a mentor who will provide advice and guidance throughout every stage of their business start-up.

Commenting on the winners, Christopher Upperman, CEO of the American Entrepreneurship Award (AEA) stated: "Year two of the American Entrepreneurship Award has kicked off wonderfully, with the first cohort of winners coming from the Miami Dade community. We are proud of these entrepreneurs for their innovative ideas and creative business plans. We are inspired by their ingenuity and fearlessness and look forward to being a catalyst toward their future success. The AEA believes that businesses are the lifeblood of local economies throughout this great nation, and we want to do our part to continue to support them. Our hope is these companies will inspire more to seek out support from organizations such as the AEA who serve as a spark to increase entrepreneurial participation across communities. We truly congratulate these winners and respect their drive, ambition, and comprehensive business approach—which has been acknowledged by our panel of judges, and team alike."

Other finalists in the 2017 award were:

1. **Arslin** - provides consumers with a dealership-free online platform for purchasing of used cars. www.arslin.com

2. **Cargo42** - a digital marketplace for local trucking committed to reduce empty miles for trucking companies and to offer lower freight rates for Less than Load (LTL) shippers. www.cargo42.com
3. **Full Circle** - a platform where people can purchase products and services that ideally memorialize their deceased – both humans and pets. The company empowers people with the products and services that help them honor their loved one the way they deserve, and helps them through the grieving process. www.gofullcircle.co
4. **Smart Barrel** - an Internet of Things (IoT) company that builds and designs products focusing on the construction industry. Smart Barrel products are physical field products that are introduced into the jobsite to assist and enhance the communication between Office and Field personnel. www.smartbarrel.co
5. **VITAL On Demand** - dietician-approved, nutritious and delicious meals and snacks delivered in under 15 minutes for a \$1 delivery fee. They serve the professional lunchtime crowd the most flavorful, nutritious meal faster and for a lower delivery fee than anyone else. www.vitalondemand.com

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

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About the American Entrepreneurship Award

AEA was established in 2015 by its founding sponsor, the Libra Group, following the success of the Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award, founded in Greece by Libra in 2012. AEA provides winners with a share of \$250,000 in business start-up funding, as well as mentorship and business support services. Each year, the Panel of Judges will select business ventures from each of the localities identified that demonstrates the best in community entrepreneurship. The prizes will give the winning businesses everything they need to get off to a flying start: a range of support services including the provision of an expert mentor, plus straightforward funding with no charges, no interest and no complexity.

Additional local AEA supporters include the Office of Assemblyman Michael Blake (D-79), My Brother's Keeper Alliance, Workshops in Business Opportunity (WIBO) and Hostos Community College.

About the 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, real estate, and shipping. The American Entrepreneurship Award is managed by Libra Group's Social Responsibility division that 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 fourth year of operation. The Libra Group is owned by the Logothetis family. For more information, please visit: www.libra.com.

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