

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Teens to showcase business plans

By **JONDI GUMZ**
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APTOS—Teens from around the county will showcase their business smarts at the 2011 Business Plan Showcase 5:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday at the Cabrillo College Horticulture Building, 6500 Soquel Drive.

The event, which takes place during Small Business Week, will feature presentations by students at four local high schools, according to Chris McGriff of Your Future is Our Business, a nonprofit based at Cabrillo.

All of the participants take classes through the Regional Occupational Program run by the county Office of Education, which aims to prepare students for life beyond the classroom. Part of the showcase will look like a science fair, with students answering questions about their displays explaining their business plans, McGriff said.

Andrew Guydish, a junior at Scotts Valley High, will talk about a clothing company he started last September with his older brother Mike, a student at Cabrillo College. The company is called Calthentic, a twist on California and authentic, and sells sweatshirts on Facebook, where it has more than 240 friends.

The brothers started the company with \$500 from their dad and split up the work. Andrew is chief financial officer and Mike, who hopes to transfer to San Jose State University, is chief marketing officer.

Their men's sweatshirts, silk-screened at Cali Style in Scotts Valley, sold out in two months. A women's version for \$30 is still available. Their next product will be T-shirts.

Three juniors from Scotts Valley High will give a presentation on a virtual toy company called Connection.

"We wanted to do something to help children," said Emily Payne, who has two cousins with autism.

"My youngest cousin can't talk," she said, explaining her focus on "tools to get through everyday life."

She partnered with Haley Robinson, whose mother is a special education teacher working with middle school students with autism, and Hannah Michelson, who created branding using a puzzle piece.

They envisioned toys at three different levels, a refrigerator magnet with pictures of food and a button which food he press to convey which food he wants, a puzzle where a child could learn names of animals by matching the shape with the name, and a video game where a child could learn social skills like shaking hands.

Michelson said she learned how much effort it takes to get a business running smoothly and Payne said she is interested in working on the company after the yearlong class ends in June.

"I could see myself doing this," Payne said.

Wendy Thresher, who teaches the ROP marketing class at Scotts Valley High, said she is impressed by her students' efforts. "They have given 110 percent every class period," Thresher said.

Other presentations will be made by students at Harbor High, Pajaro Valley High and San Lorenzo Valley High.

Pam Falke-Krueger, who teaches business and marketing at Harbor High, said she hopes students will meet people at the showcase who are willing to mentor them. She also hopes students see small business and entrepreneurship as viable career options and gain a greater understanding of the importance of networks.

One possibility, she noted, is students will meet students from other schools and engage in dialogue that may result in work groups, discussion groups or future projects that are countywide.

Participating students will have the opportunity to win

one of 50 gift certificates donated by locally owned small businesses. Local business owners were very supportive of the

showcase, McGriff said.

Other supporters include the Small Business Development Center at Cabrillo College,

which offers monthly workshops to help startups launch.

Students in the Regional Occupational Program culi-

nary class will cater the business showcase. A flier by Aptos High student Christopher Davis silhouetting nine

businesspeople that won a class contest is being used to promote the event.

Admission is free.

IF YOU GO

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS
 PROJECT BUSINESS
 PLAN SHOWCASE

WHEN: 5:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday

WHERE: Cabrillo College
 Horticulture Building, 6500 Soquel
 Drive, Aptos

COST: Free

DETAILS: www.yfiob.org