FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE · NOVEMBER 18, 2020

Street Entrepreneurs Graduates Cohort of 1,000 DMV Founders

Top eight will showcase their businesses virtually at the Street Pitch showcase

WASHINGTON, D.C. (November 18, 2020) – Today, Street Entrepreneurs (SE) announced its cohort of 1,000 Washington metropolitan area entrepreneurs would culminate with #StreetPitch2020 on December 15, 7 to 8 pm ET. Street Pitch changes traditional pitch competitions by engaging the audience to contribute funds and resources to finalists. It mobilizes 100+ organizations to leverage their followership and simulcast technology to reach people globally.

Eight peer-selected finalists, composed of all womxn and BIPOC, will share their journeys and pitch their companies to a judging panel of experts and investors who will provide recommendations. The virtual audience will then vote with their money by directly investing in their favorite entrepreneurs through crowdfunding campaigns, product purchases, and in-kind contributions. The event will live stream on Street Entrepreneurs' social media pages and simulcast via 100+ partner organizations. To further support the finalists, Street Entrepreneurs is hosting a silent auction on November 27; proceeds will match a portion of the capital raised by Street Pitch finalists during the livestream.

"If American Idol and Shark Tank had a baby, it would be called Street Pitch," said Street Entrepreneurs Founder and CEO Juliana Cardona Mejia. "Our Street Pitch finalists will pitch YOU, the digital audience, and YOU will decide who gets your investment. We believe it takes a founder to know a founder, so this year the finalists were chosen by our 1,000-member cohort. #StreetPitch2020 will be filmed at landmarks in every Ward of Washington DC using strict COVID-19 safety protocols."

Throughout 2020, amidst the pandemic, Street Entrepreneurs hosted 60 virtual workshops on design thinking, emotional intelligence, strategy, sales, partnerships, operations, team building, financial and distribution management, public relations, product marketing, access to capital, licensing, and legal nuance. SE also connected founders to industry mentors and skill-focused coaches via Talent Exchange sessions and hosted town halls to organize a COVID-19 small businesses response team. Street Pitch is the entrepreneurs' championship and concluding pillar of the Street Entrepreneurs educational accelerator program.

THE #STREETPITCH2020 FINALISTS

- **Charanor Marcano**, Founder of Charanor. A premium leather goods company that creates beautiful, wearable shoes for women of all shoe sizes, and offers leather craft classes to individuals who wouldn't typically have access, such as cancer survivors at the Creative Center.

- **Fabrice Guerrier**, Founder of Syllble Studios. The first science fiction and fantasy writers' production house, inviting fiction authors to collaborate virtually to design a shared fictional universe.
- **Jessica Dew**, Founder of CLIQQ. An all-in-one contact sharing and relationship management app.
- **Maddie Boening**, Founder of Sunstone Candles. Handmade soy candles, each with a surprise semi-precious crystal inside.
- **Meghan Brown**, Founder of Meditate Boldly. Handmade functional art and home decor inspired by nature, designed to lower stress and encourage self-care.
- **Paul Joseph**, Founder of Vegan Skin by Paul Joseph. An all-natural, plant-based skincare company with clean products of fewer than 10 ingredients.
- **Ruth Rau**, Founder of Mouse Loves Pig. An independent toy brand focused on sustainably sourced, organic baby toys designed to level up creativity.
- **Walter Pearson**, Founder of College Bound Parenting. A college planning e-learning platform that equips parents and students with the tools and knowledge to go to college.

STREET PITCH JUDGES

Each pitch will receive feedback from three judges relevant to their industry and needs.

- Aaron Saunders, Founder and CEO, Clearly Innovative and Inclusive Innovation Incubator
- Alisha Griffey, Founder & CEO, Daintree Capital
- Aurelia Flores, Managing Member, Athena Digital Media Group
- Brandon Andrews, Keynote Speaker; Co-Founder, Gauge
- BJ McDuffie, Evaluation and Engagement Manager, TechCamp Program, U.S. Department of State
- Christopher Upperman, Manager of Governance & Strategic Initiatives, Facebook
- Danielle Toussaint, Founder and Chief Storyteller, She Thinks Purple
- Duane McKnight, Managing Partner, the Marathon Fund
- Emmanuel Kaska, Partner, 1863 Ventures; Co-Founder & CEO, Paradigm Labs
- John Page, Founder, Groupsurfing
- Kristi C. Whitfield, Director, Department of Small and Local Business Development
- Manny Cosme, President & CEO, CFO Services Group
- Maryann Lombardi, Manager, 202Creates and Associate Director, DC Office of Creative Affairs
- Maurice Boissiere, Founder, Higher Calling Ventures; Chief Customer Officer, DataTribe
- Meghan Gaffney Buck, Founder and CEO, Veda Data
- Michelle Thimesch, Co-Founder, Crowdfund Mainstreet
- Rachel Koretsky, Founder, Upace

- Toby Chaudhuri, Co-founder & CSO, SocialxDesign
- William Eric Linzey, Interim Director, Anacostia Business Development Center, and Senior Business Consultant, 19Seventeen
- Wolf Ruzicka, Chairman of the Board, EastBanc Technologies
- Zoe Dean-Smith, Vice President, Economic Empowerment & Entrepreneurship, Vital Voices Global Partnership

ABOUT STREET ENTREPRENEURS

Street Entrepreneurs is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit focused on building power. The organization is rooted in the belief that people experiencing problems have the insights needed to solve them. We envision a world where people who are crazy enough to see a world that doesn’t exist, and with enough grit to bring it to life, have access to capital, networks and knowledge. SE takes pride in mirroring the demographics of the District, and, with the support of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, was able to provide wrap-around services and build equity in the innovation ecosystem.

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Archived copy from the Street Entrepreneurs records (2015 to 2025). Contact details and expired links have been removed.