

For Immediate Release

The Idea Village Announces its 2015 IDEAx Class

10 New Orleans based Startup Ventures Selected into Intensive Business Accelerator Program

(New Orleans, LA) September 16, 2015 – Today, The Idea Village announces the 19 local entrepreneurs from 10 new ventures participating in its 6th annual IDEAx program. IDEAx is an intensive 12-week accelerator focused on creating scalable and fundable businesses. The program provides access to The Idea Village’s influential network of mentors and experts to ensure that participating entrepreneurs have the resources necessary to accelerate the growth of their ventures and develop the skills required to emerge as entrepreneurial leaders. The 2015 program will begin on Monday, September 22, 2014 and culminate in Demo Day on Tuesday, December 9, 2014.

This year’s IDEAx program will be led by The Idea Village’s 2015 Entrepreneurs-in-Residence, private equity investor **Hank Torbert** and serial entrepreneur **J. Anthony Miguez**. With over 35 years of combined experience in startup ventures and investment, Torbert and Miguez will provide individualized coaching and intensive business consulting for the cohort.

“Having played a critical role in the expansion of many business ventures across the country, I am amazed at the sophistication of these 10 New Orleans startups and the new approaches that each team is bringing to its respective industry,” said Torbert.

“The 2015 IDEAx entrepreneurs represent next generation business leaders with next level ideas,” said Miguez. “This diverse mix of founders shares an appreciation of the rhythms, rituals, and relationships that make New Orleans’ startup community so unique.”

The IDEAx application process is highly competitive to identify the most capable and innovative entrepreneurs in New Orleans. This year, 81 startups applied and The Idea Village team of advisors has selected a portfolio poised for growth to participate. The selected founders have deep domain experience – and three of the 10 founding teams recently moved to New Orleans to launch their ventures. With innovative ideas in a variety of industries including, technology, healthcare, fashion, logistics, art, and education, the 2015 IDEAx class is a reflection of the dynamic local entrepreneurial community. The 2015 class also represents the growing ecosystem as two of the companies have previously leveraged the support of our partners 4.0 Schools and Propeller.

The 2015 IDEAx class includes: **BeneFit** (Andrew Ryan, Chris Scoville, Gerard Cox & Ryan Linstrom), **Gustofy LLC** (Josie Guste), **Locally.com** (Blake Haney, Ben Hirsch & Mike Massey), **myMix Nutrition** (Crutcher Reiss & Sarah Kirkwood Reiss), **The Remedy Room** (Dr. Mignonne C. Mary), **Vaykay by App Krewe, LLC** (Justin Zimmerman), **Wedocracy, LLC** (Uchechi Kalu Jacobson & Peter Jacobson), **Welcome to College** (Justin Bayer), **Whereyart.net** (Catherine Todd & Collin Ferguson), and **The Wild Life Reserve** (Michaiah Bethune & Tabitha Bethune).

“We recently moved to New Orleans because of the people, the culture and the amazing spirit of entrepreneurship and renewal, so we’re excited to be part of IDEAx 2015, which brings together everything we love about this city,” said Uchechi Kalu Jacobson, Co-founder of Wedocracy.com. “We’re looking forward to working with IDEAx mentors and advisors who know what it takes to succeed and can help us bring social wedding planning to the market.”

“The 2015 IDEAx class is representative of New Orleans’ strong entrepreneurial community,” said Tim Williamson, Co-founder and CEO of The Idea Village. “The 2015 cohort will join the growing network of successful entrepreneurs who have participated in The Idea Village’s programs since 2000.”

Idea Village alumni include: *4D Supplements, Advanced Polymer Monitoring Technologies, Audiosocket, Better Day Health, Be Well Nutrition, Bioceptive, Bluebag, Cajun Fire Brewing Company, ChapterSpot, Cordina, CultureConnect, Dinner Lab, Ducky, education everytime, eTax Credit Exchange, Federated Sample, IMOTO Photo, iSeatz, KREWE du optic, gotointerview.com, Huka Entertainment, Jack & Jake’s, Kickboard, LifeCity, Maritant, MobileQubes, mSchool, Munivestor, Naked Pizza, NOLA Brewing Company, NOLAcajun.com, NOLA Couture, NOVate Medical Technologies, NuMe Health, The Occasional Wife, Retail Goose, Spa Workshop, StaffInsight, Tutti Dynamics, Your Nutrition Delivered, and zlien.*

MEET THE 2015 IDEAx CLASS:

- 1. BeneFit – Andrew Ryan, Chris Scoville, Gerard Cox & Ryan Linstrom**
BeneFit is an engagement platform that encourages healthy behaviors by allowing individuals to earn self-selected rewards when they track their exercise routine using smartphone applications and fitness bands.
- 2. Gustofy LLC – Josie Guste**
Gustofy will be a dynamic and interactive web-based platform designed to empower commodity shippers with the information and tools to make smart decisions about transporting and handling their freight. With New Orleans being connected to over 12,000 miles of navigable U.S. inland waterways, I am proud to start a company that will support and inspire its growth right here in the “Big Easy”.
- 3. Locally.com – Blake Haney, Ben Hirsch & Mike Massey**
Locally.com powers the discovery of products and brands and that are in-stock at local retailers in your community. Our platform enhances the brand experience for consumers and supports local economies.
- 4. myMix Nutrition – Crutcher Reiss & Sarah Kirkwood Reiss**
myMix Nutrition is the first ever e-commerce platform geared towards providing individuals and organizations with the ability to customize their own ready-to-mix dietary supplement. Customers can draw from array of the highest quality ingredients via an educational and transparent buying platform that is built on integrity.
- 5. The Remedy Room – Dr. Mignonne C. Mary**
The Remedy Room is a boutique infusion clinic that provides innovative wellness and medical services to address dehydration, vitamin deficiencies, metabolic issues, detox, and fatigue. With over 50 years of cumulative medical experience, The Remedy Room promotes a sustainable, healthy lifestyle, and provides customized solutions for your specific needs all in a comfortable, modern setting.
- 6. Vaykay by App Krewe, LLC – Justin Zimmerman**
Vaykay is a Salesforce.com AppExchange application that takes the hassle out of managing your employees’ vacation and sick days. Replace your company’s time off spreadsheets, paper forms, and expensive software with an integrated, fully automated cloud application.
- 7. Wedocracy, LLC – Uchechi Kalu Jacobson & Peter Jacobson**
Wedocracy solves the problem of wedding planning stress for everyone involved. Built by an engaged couple during their engagement, wedocracy brings fun back to weddings by giving couples & their guests a social network to collaborate, communicate, socialize and network privately. It’s Facebook + Basecamp, for weddings.
- 8. Welcome to College – Justin Bayer**
Welcome to College helps higher education institutions ignite clarity, passion, and purpose into their campus visit experiences. Through online, mobile and in-person coaching programs, we are redefining college fit using the latest research on adolescent well-being and happiness, helping colleges create meaningful connections with prospective students.
- 9. Whereyart.net – Catherine Todd & Collin Ferguson**
Where Y’Art is a catalyst for local art communities. It is a community resource for lovers of art to discover the next generation of New Orleans artists and helping those artists turn their passion into profits. Whereyart.net is an online gallery with a curated selection of artwork ranging from painting and jewelry to furniture. It is a social shopping network where you can discover, follow, and shop directly from local artists.
- 10. The Wild Life Reserve – Michaiah Bethune & Tabitha Bethune**
The Wild Life Reserve is a brand consulting/management concept that protects style, brands and manufacturing, the three key elements needed to grow the fashion industry. They do this by working with designers, taking them from “dirt to shirt” through education and awareness.

ABOUT THE IDEA VILLAGE:

In 2000, The Idea Village was formed by a group of New Orleans citizens who believed entrepreneurship is a catalyst for positive change. The Idea Village formalized in 2002 as an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization with a mission to identify, support, and retain entrepreneurial talent in New Orleans by providing direct service to high-impact entrepreneurs, educating the broader community, and supporting initiatives that strengthen our entrepreneurial infrastructure. In addition, The Idea Village hosts New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, a business festival that has become the platform for the New Orleans entrepreneurial ecosystem. Over the past six years (2009 – 2014), The Idea Village has provided direct support to over 3,411 New Orleans entrepreneurs by engaging over 2,600 professionals to allocate 68,543 consulting hours and \$3.2 million in seed capital. 149 of the 3,411 ventures supported have been selected into core accelerator programs. Over 83% of our accelerator alumni are still in business. Collectively, they have created over 1,100 jobs and generate \$85 million in annual revenue, resulting in an estimated \$105 million in economic impact for the region each year. Learn more at www.ideavillage.org and follow us on Twitter @ideavillage.