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News

Clyde YEA! students win scholarships

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ROCHESTER — A pair of Clyde-Savannah school district students took third place Friday in the Young Entrepreneurs Academy regional finals at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

That ranking gave both students, Wyatt Thorn and Kyle Fitch, \$20,000 scholarships to RIT. Their business plan, W.T. Bean, was to develop and sell various sized soybean-filled fabric bags that can be heated in a microwave, hold their heat for three hours, and can warm hands and other body parts.

"It's an amazing accomplishment. That's probably one of the largest scholarships we've received in a long time," said Clyde-Savannah business teacher and YEA! Instructor Thomas Kanaley Sr.

The team was one of five to compete in the finals round. On Thursday, 13 teams competed in the semi-finals for the Saunders Scholars Bright Ideas Regional Business Competition at Harris Beach PLLC in Pittsford. In addition to Clyde-Savannah, Dundee, Geneva, Penn Yan and Sodus teams also participated. Geneva placed first in the semi-finals but was unable to attend the finals. Sodus students Brandon Butler and Jenson Davis and a Boys & Girls Club of Rochester advanced with Clyde-Savannah.

At the finals, a student from Illinois placed second, earning a \$25,000 scholarship. A Webster team of three students finished first, giving them each \$30,000 scholarships.

Kanaley said the scholarship money took him by surprise. The YEA! class began this school year, but he said he was unaware of the prize until January or February. The nine-month program, in its first year of implementation in area school districts, meets five times a week and is the equivalent of a regular class. It includes mentors, guest speakers and field trips.

By the end, students own and operate fully formed and functioning businesses, which may be carried on after their graduation from the program.

Thorn and Fitch happened to meet Philip Saunders, whose name marks the scholarship, and wasted no time after the semi-finals: They gave a prototype of their product to him for marketing purposes.

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