

Students start their own businesses

They used a trade show to show off the stuff of their dreams.

By DAN GOLDMAN

Messenger Post Staff

Once upon a time, when students started their own businesses, it often meant lemonade stands and dog-walking services.

Barker Road Middle School seventh-grader Ani Patel is aiming higher, and farther.

His business, Intel 4 India aims to teach English to students in rural India through video conferencing. He presented his Intel 4 India to the public Thursday, May 15 at the Young Entrepreneurs Academy program and trade show at the University of Rochester.

Ani, 13, got the opportunity to the start and run his business thanks to the program, now in its fourth year. Over nine months, students learned how to take an idea and turn it into a fully operational business.

Intel 4 India already found a teacher in India who is going to provide the lessons to a classroom in Bagalkot. They are working on a syllabus for the inaugural program.

"I just wanted to help my country," Ani said. "I thought that helping children is the best idea. You can't get a good job without knowing English."

Ani is one of many students who started business in the class of 2007-08. The Young Entrepreneurs students are instructed by Rochester area entrepreneurs.

"They learn all of the key elements," said the program's head, Gayle Jagel. "From idea-generation to business-plan development to pitching proposals to investors to fund their ideas to opening bank accounts

and then the ultimate launch of their businesses."

To draw investment money, all of the entrepreneurs gave a six-minute presentation to real investors in the Rochester area such as Time Warner and Paetec Communications.

While Intel 4 India is at work overseas, other businesses aimed to sell products at the show. Miaya Fountain-Williams, 12, of Twelve Corners Middle School and her partner Imani Rice, 12, of Barker Road Middle School, created Fly Feet. The business offers footwear accessories to "dress your feet."

The girls needed to arrange a manufacturer to produce the aluminum base of the Fly Feet item, which they decorated themselves.

Fairport High School senior David Petersen started Wombat Web Design, offering a Web-site template for high school newspapers.

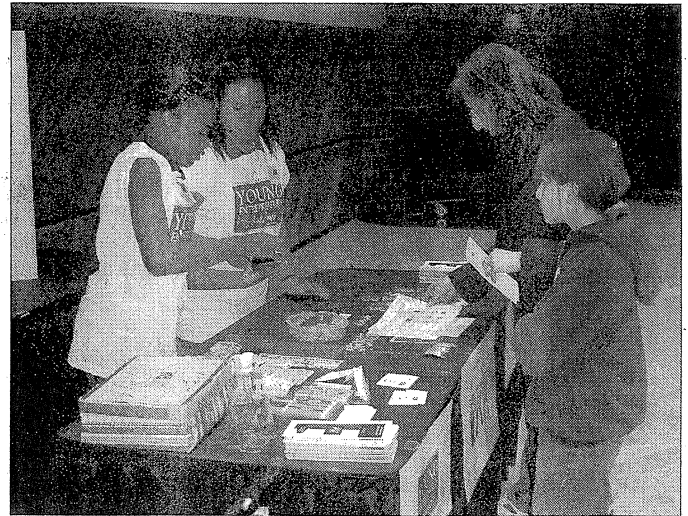
"I find the newspapers given out at my school all over the halls," David said. "The parents and teachers don't get to see them (and) it's more cost-effective than printing your newspaper once a month."

He said while the product isn't completely ready, Bishop Kearney High School is interested.

Though the students graduated from the Academy May 20, it doesn't mean their businesses stopped running.

"These are real businesses," Jagel said. "The students will continue their businesses for as long as they decide. They are fully functioning legal entities. They'll have to file tax returns and everything that is necessary with a real business."

Contact Dan Goldman at dgoldman@messengerpostmedia.com.



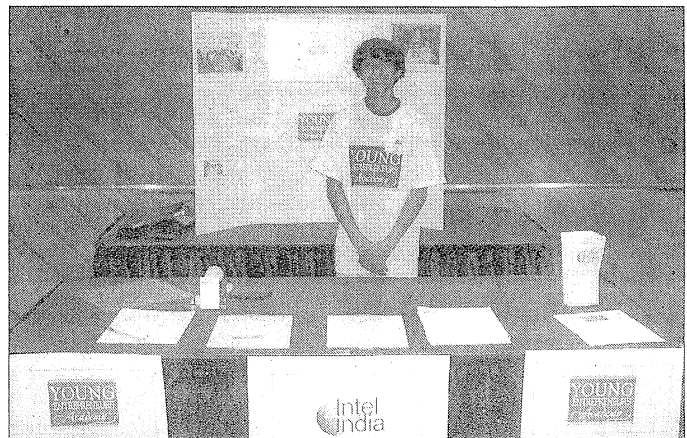
STAFF PHOTO/DAN GOLDMAN

Miaya Fountain Williams of Twelve Corners Middle School (left) and Imani Rice of Barker Road Middle School show their product Fly Feet to customers at the Young Entrepreneurs Academy Trade Show. Fly Feet provides decoration for footwear.



STAFF PHOTO/DAN GOLDMAN

Kaitlin Geier, of Webster, Ed Hoi of Pittsford and Zachary Simpson of Webster show their FLAVR drink product at the Young Entrepreneurs Academy Trade Show at the University of Rochester.



STAFF PHOTO/DAN GOLDMAN

Ani Patel, an eighth-grader at Barker Road Middle School stands at his booth for Intel 4 India. Ani's business helps teach English to children in rural India. Ani learned to start his business at the Young Entrepreneurs Academy at the University of Rochester.