

MONTGOMERY CEO

CREATING ENTREPRENEURIAL
OPPORTUNITIES



21 ANNUAL
22 REPORT



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Midland 
Institute for Entrepreneurship
AN ENTREPRENEURIAL
EDUCATION PARTNER



From the desk of Chairman Heather Hampton+Knodle:

Fluid.

We are going into our 8th year of navigating how to support young entrepreneurs. The number of CEOs that continue to work as managers and to operate their own businesses in our county has surprised me -- exceeding expectations. There are several who have married in the last year or two and settled in our county as well.

Just like business, the CEO program ebbs and flows. The last two years we have lucked out and had engaged CEOs and educational leaders who were capable of adapting to the COVID era. They embodied the Zen concept of "flowing like a stream." [Remember, the academic year started in August and it was only March 1 when the state announced masks were optional in school and at the end of April that airlines would allow us to fly mask-free.]

At times it may have felt like riding Class 5 rapids for those in charge of decision making, our local schools, healthcare facilities, and businesses who made adapting to uncertainty in the COVID era possible. Our schools developed policies to protect student and faculty health, while maximizing learning. Our host businesses did the same for their employees and many were still open to hosting our CEOs.

Internally, we have gone through substantial transition as Jodi Reynolds completed her first year as Facilitator and brought an emphasis on community engagement alongside business learning. She did an amazing job dealing with the new variables, and we are fortunate to have her guiding the boat. We are also fortunate to have engaged mentors and Investors to keep the CEOs and the program on course.

A tidal wave of activity floods the end of the academic year that culminated with the CEO Marketplace. A shout out to the Litchfield Park District and Community Building for such a wonderful facility and to our event planning team who arranged food vendors and set up!

Current and incoming CEOs took an end-of-year trip, made possible by Hillsboro Area Hospital, to BioSTL and the Cortex in St. Louis, Altonworks and Simmons, Hanly and Conroy LLC in Alton to learn about business startups, capital, shared workspaces and community and economic development.

Our board of directors is a set of different perspectives from the founding board with one exception, me, as I continue in an ex officio role to provide institutional knowledge or a helping hand when needed.

A May highlight was welcoming incoming 2022-2023 CEOs who made a splash at orientation. It's fulfilling to work with each CEO to learn their interests and goals and to help accomplish those feats.

THANK YOU for making it all possible. Your investment of time and financial support continues to ripple through our local economy and social currents. May you experience fair sailing ahead.

Anchors Away!

Heather Hampton+Knodle, Chairman, Montgomery CEO

From the desk of Facilitator Jodi Reynolds:

The CEO class of 2022, included five Lincolnwood High School students, one Hillsboro High School student, three Nokomis High School students and one Litchfield High School student. Our team had 46 Business Tours throughout Montgomery County, 22 guest speakers and 10 Fearless Founders Speakers.

The Fair Market Value Challenge was the first business opportunity the team to engaged in, turning \$1 into \$100 in two weeks. Businesses varied from services to craft items to selling baked goods. Profit for this short term business venture was \$1,041.



The Badge Business was the first team business activity--learning to work with each other and to market to local businesses for their name badges and CEO jackets. CEOs prepared marketing packages for prospects and sold enough sponsorship packages to cover their costs while also making a profit. The Badge Business profited \$4,327.80.

This year's Class Business was CEO-2-GO, a curb-side pickup catered meal offered on two separate nights and in two different locations on December 5 at the U of I Extension Office in Hillsboro and December 19 at the Memorial Park House in Nokomis. In addition to the meal, the CEO team offered a holiday light display and special guest appearance by the Grinch in Hillsboro and a Christmas Trunk-or-Treat in Nokomis. While the revenue of the class business didn't meet their expectations, they learned valuable lessons about what they could have done differently--all part of the learning experience of CEO. Their net profit of the two-part event was \$2,985.84.

Second semester welcomed the experience of Personal Businesses--taking the learning and the growth of the first semester into action! Team members also partnered up with mentors from our surrounding communities to develop and implement their personal business plan. Guest Speakers and Business Tours gave content that team members could put into auction for their personal business, for example registering a DBA, Sales Tax and Insurance.

All of this work moved the team toward their final event of the year: the Montgomery CEO Marketplace. This year's event was at the Litchfield Community Center on May 3 from 4 to 7 p.m. Team members put in a tremendous amount of work to prepare their personal business booths and displays to showcase and market their services, products and events to attendees. Favorable attendance numbers helped with the success of the Marketplace event for our young entrepreneurs.

My first year as the Montgomery CEO facilitator was one that I will cherish forever. It's also one that has taught me that even with my experience in life and business, I myself can find room to grow. The businesses we toured, the guest speakers we heard and the team environment we created became our toolbox of knowledge we can take with us. I'm thankful for the other instrumental people who make this program what it is; Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC), Montgomery CEO Board, the Mentors, the Business Tour Hosts and their team members, the Guest Speakers, Class Host Sites and the Midland Institute.

Jodi Reynolds, Facilitator, Montgomery CEO

CEO TO GO

On December 5 in Hillsboro and December 19 in Nokomis, the CEO team offered to-go meals! The meal featured pulled pork, sides and a cookie. Unique entertainment at each pick-up featured a Christmas Light Display, holiday games for kids and adults, The Grinch and a winter-themed trunk or treat!



BADGE BUSINESS

The Badge Business is one of the first projects the CEOs take on. They learn to build on our personal capital with the team and with others they meet and work with, so with every new contact they have a fresh start. The challenges of the Badge Business continue to expose the team to key concepts and learning situations. Badge sponsors provide the initial capital the CEOs need to start building the foundation for funding their class business and individual businesses. Thank you to these Platinum sponsors as well as the Gold, Silver and Bronze level sponsors!

MISSION:

CEO nurtures entrepreneurial thinkers who possess awareness of themselves and their communities.

VISION:

To be learners, owners, creators communicators and connectors.
The CEO class embodies everything that our country was built upon.
The core principles of hard work, innovative thinking, and entrepreneurship are values that we experience every day through CEO.



Cameron Crow

About his business: Cameron is the founder of **Crow Threads**. Many young people give little-to-no thought how they dress in the morning. Crow Threads aims to help them transform and enhance their wardrobes. Boasting simple, sleek and modern designs, Crow Threads offers its customers the value of accessible and quality graphic t-shirts for those on a budget. Our products can be found on Facebook @CrowThreads or email Cameron at cbcrow03@gmail.com.

What he learned: "Confidence in my ability to simply DO. I'm more able to envision a path for myself and see it out to the end."



Timothy Ensley

About his business: Timothy is the founder of **Red's Game Knight**. Are you bored at home or do you have no one to play games with? Well, why don't you come down to Red's Game Knight? Red's Game Knight is an event working with Project Third Day and aims to give back to the community while bringing together. These events are themed around Pokemon and Magic. To hear more, message Timothy at 217-718-0224. May you too feel the magic of Red's Game Knight.

What he learned: "CEO has given me so much, but the biggest thing would be all of the information I have gained and the ability to communicate easier. My team inspired me to keep moving forward and improve in every way."



Landon Engleman

About his business: Landon is the founder of **LA Retail**. Have you ever struggled to find a local store that has high end sneakers? With LA Retail, I will be providing the sale of these high end shoes that can be hard to find locally. All of my sales will be through StockX, which guarantees authenticity. To start shopping, visit StockX.com or download the app.

What he learned: "CEO gave me the ability to speak to and in front of adults professionally and comfortably. Also the ability to absorb key information and take notes."



Matthew Hill

About his business: Matthew is the founder of Hill's Metal Art & Forging. Has the mass-manufactured hardware sold in today's stores made your home feel bland like every other home? Well, Hill's Metal Art & Forge has the perfect selection of unique and intricately made household hardware. I take my time on each product to ensure that every purchase is individualized and completely hand-made in-house. There is a limited quantity of products so visit Facebook or call 217-825-0411 to order now.

What he learned: "Everything from actual experience to networking and that people are willing to help you."



Samantha Jackson

About her business: Samantha is the founder of **Sticker Spirit**. Sticker Spirit strives to make quality stickers that will suit anyone's aesthetic, personality, or feeling. Here, our products are created with passion and dedication to artistry. With our premium waterproof vinyl, these can go anywhere! When you work with us for custom or pre-designed orders your wishes are only a wisp away, so contact us at Sticker.Spirit.By.Sam on Facebook or Instagram today!

What she learned: "CEO gave me both the opportunity and the knowledge to create something bigger of myself. After being in this class, I know that I can do it all if I try hard enough and my future will be everything I've ever dreamed it could be."



Presley Lamb

About her business: Presley is the founder of **Polished by Presley**. Are you tired of spending money on overpriced jewelry that doesn't match your personal style? Polished by Presley provides quality jewelry for a low price that can be worn anytime, anywhere. I love wearing this jewelry and enjoy seeing others feeling their best in this jewelry. I can be found on Facebook at Polished by Presley-Jewelry and you can find my website there as well. My phone number is 217-361-8244 and my email is palamb04@gmail.com

What she learned: "Preparation for the future, being able to manage money, how to start from the bottom and work your way to the top."



Ethan Lentz

About his business: Ethan is the founder of **Sky High Films**. Capturing those special moments from a birds-eye view is Sky High Films' specialty! We offer aerial photography and videography of Weddings, Farm Land and Real Estate. Call now 217-710-9362 or email ethanwlentz@gmail.com to get a quote today.

His special accomplishment: Ethan entered his 30-second pitch in the National Pitch Competition. The CEO contestants are judged by panel of high level entrepreneurs who provide these young entrepreneurs a launching pad going into their future. Ethan was awarded with Honorable Mention among 170 entries.



Cora Stevens

About her business: Cora is the founder of **Wire-To-Attire**. Wire-To-Attire specializes in both pre-made and custom handcrafted jewelry that will bring a special feature to anybody's aesthetic. Custom jewelry can stand as a token of your individuality, and the pieces I produce range from conventional and sleek to niche styles. My goal is to add a personal touch to every item I produce so whoever wears my jewelry wears a story as their accessory. Contact me at 217-313-3973 or Facebook @WireToAttire22.

Her special accomplishment: CEO Marketplace attendees selected Cora and Wire-To-Attire as the People's Choice Award, recognizing her marketing and merchandising skills for her booth. Cora was also awarded a \$500 scholarship from Patton & Co.



Kaden Weakley and Luke Webb

About their business: Kaden Weakley and Luke Webb are the co-founders of **L&K Powerwashing**. Power washing done right is L&K's motto. L&K power washing was first started in the summer of 2021 by Luke Webb and Kaden Weakley with the goal of bettering the community one clean house at a time. L&K provides a cleaning service to home in our communities at an affordable price for a job well done. Their services include siding, sidewalks, driveways, patios, decks, fences and farm equipment. Call L&K now at 217-851-6191 (Kaden) or 217-414-4897 (Luke) for your pressure washing needs you can also find us on Facebook.

What he learned: "The best thing CEO gave me is the confidence and skill to engage in conversation for networking a sale."



What he learned: "CEO has taught me a lot about business etiquette from running a business efficiently to properly."

Congratulations to these CEOs who received special recognition:

Cameron Crow: Entrepreneurial Spirit Award and Most Deserving Award
 Cora Stevens: Patton & Co. Scholarship and Marketplace People's Choice Award
 Presley Lamb: Patton & Co. Scholarship
 Ethan Lentz: MIE 2022 National Pitch Competition Honorable Mention

CEO MARKETPLACE

The CEOs strategy, planning and hard work culminated in a year-end marketing place on May 3 from 4-7 p.m. at the Litchfield Community Center. CEOs greeted attendees and customers at their individual booths to showcase their products and services.

Thank you to those that helped make this event a success and valuable learning opportunity for the CEOs!



CAPSTONE TOUR

On May 10, current CEOs and incoming CEOs attended the 2022 Capstone Tour coordinated by our Chairwoman Heather Hampton-Knodle and supported by Hillsboro Area Hospital. The group visited businesses and organizations in the St. Louis Metro area, including:

- BioSTL in The Cortex Innovation Community. CEOs learned about the strategic planning and development of this area and it's location near the airport, public transit and the University. The team enjoyed seeing how the advancement of the work environment can foster creativity.
- AltonWorks revitalization of downtown Alton. This \$125 million project includes pedestrian-friendly landscapes, rooftop and riverfront development, and renovations of the city's long-abandoned landmarks. It encouraged CEOs to ponder what attracts young professionals to come back to an area.
- McPike Mansion in Alton. The tour gave history of the mansion when occupied by Henry Guest McPike and a tour of the old wine cellar. The current owner spoke to the CEOs about their succession plans for the tour business when her husband and she retire.
- Simmons Hanly Conroy LLC philanthropy work. CEOs learn about the value of employees and importance of teamwork. They shared a list of 25 Lessons with the CEOs including: 1. Do the right thing! 2. Have fun! 3. Think forward. Work hard today!

Thank you to the hosts, speakers and supporters of this tour who certainly raised the bar in knowledge and civic duty opportunities.



An important piece of the CEO experience is visiting local businesses in Montgomery County. Recognizing their contribution to economic development of the area, helps the CEOs leave with a changed mindset, never viewing the business the same way again.

Ken Meade Photography, Ken Meade
Creekstone Kettle Works, Colleen Weir
Betzold Farms, Bruce Betzold & Austin Bezold
Salvation Army, Kelli Jennings
Litchfield Family Funeral Service, Misty Reed & Marty Dawson
Street Eats and Sweet Addictions, Alora & Matt Chandler
Aumann Auctions, Kurt Aumann
Wind Hill Puppies, Tina Hill
Nokomis Town Pump, Lance Lehnen
Hayes Abrasives, Dave Hayes
Skyview Drive-In, Mindy Pastrovich
All Precision Manufacturing, Jeff Howell
Knodle Ltd. Farms., Heather Hampton+Knodle
The Hilltop Coop, Jonathan Weyer
Briar Rose, Danell Fogle
Hardcore Hammers, Steve Spencer
The Red Rooster Inn, Kendra Wright
First Baptist Church, Ryan Follis
Gold Pan Records, Matt Sands & Brian Lee
Litchfield Farmer's Grain, Spencer, Abby and Rachell
Raise the Bar, Heather Greenwood
Montgomery County Farm Bureau, Katie Wilson
Nokomis Auto Body, Lukas Jachino

CTI, Billy Williams
Marten Insurance, Ray Marten
ECB Ag Inc., Ethan Brown
H&R Block, Brett & Shelli Crow
Maverick Steak House, Kara Steffens
Country Financial, Nathan Clementz
Trendz, Andrea Ruppert
Montgomery County Clerk, Sandy Leitheiser
Montgomery County Recorder, Nikki Lohman
The Journal News, Mike Plunkett
Glenn & West Attorney ET Law, Trent & Krystal West
Fusion Fitness Center, Linda Weiss & Kylie Kirby
Jeff Eisentraut
Eisentraut Theatres, Jeff Eisentraut
Cake it On Corner Cakery, Jessica Petty Durbin
Ugly Mugs, McKinsy Lietz
Short Furniture, Bill Short
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce, Kaitlyn Fath
Atlas 46, Caleb Reynolds
Borgic Pork Partners, LTD, Phil Borgic
Nokomis Gift and Garden, Lola Spears
McKay Auto Parts, Earl Flack
Poogan's Creamery, Carmen Halsey
Bank of Hillsboro, Misty Barrowman & Patrick Ward



Our Program Investors provide support to our community driven program. An annual investment of \$1,000 provides the necessary resources for current-year facilitator salary and operating expenses, and ensures the sustainability of the PROGRAM NAME class for future students. Investors also contribute their time to the program. Hosting host business visits, provide guest speakers and serve as mentors. All crucial to the success of Montgomery CEO.

All Precision Manufacturing
Ameriprise Financial
Animal Medical Center of Litchfield
Aumann Auctions
Bank and Trust Company
Borgic Pork Partners, Ltd.
Brandt Consolidated
Computations
Country Financial-Nathan Clementz
CTI
Doctors Barbara and Robert Mulch
Farmers Grain Litchfield-Fillmore
Financial Services of America
First Community Bank of Hillsboro
First National Bank of Litchfield
First National Bank of Nokomis
First National Bank of Raymond
Hayes Abrasives
Hillsboro Area Hospital
Hurst-Rosche Engineers
Ken Meade Photography
Kerber, Eck and Braeckel LLP
Knodle, Ltd.

Litchfield National Bank
MarkNet Alliance
Marten Insurance Inc
MJM Electric Cooperative, Inc.
MLH Futures
Montgomery CEO Class of 2018
Montgomery CEO Class of 2020
Montgomery County Farm Bureau
Bank of Hillsboro
Niemann Grain Farms Inc
Nokomis Savings Bank
Patton and Company PC
Ronk Electrical Industries
Security National Bank
Sloan Implement
St. Francis Hospital
Stiehl-Dawson Funeral Home
The Journal News
White and Associates
Worksaver
Montgomery County Board
Montgomery County Economic
Development Corporation

MENTORS

A mentor is a business owner, entrepreneur, or intrapreneur from the Montgomery County business community who shares their time and expertise with a CEO student to provide insight and direction.

Dustin Jones, CTI
JR LeVora, Epic Entertainment
Lukas Jachino, Nokomis Auto Body
Nathan Clementz, Country Companies
Brandi Lentz, Montgomery County Realty
Logan Altenberger, Altenberger Arbitrage
Kent Aumann Aumann Realty & Appraisal
Katie Smith, Aumann Auctions
Valerie Belusko, MCEDC
Jackie Rakers, Illinois Association of Mutual
Insurance Companies





CEO participants have a unique experience with guest speakers serving as instructors for the program. Community leaders present their stories, entrepreneurial journeys and share lessons on a variety of business topics. Highlighted names are CEO Alumni! Thank you to these speakers:

Maia Casterline, CEO Experience, Bobo Tough Toys
 Clint Stevens, Life Lessons
 Katie Smith, Aumann Auctions
 Earlene Robinson, Illinois Department of Revenue
 Kelsey Flack & Katy Evans, Humble House Boutique
 JR LeVora, Epic Entertainment
Kylie Ettl, Lakeside Outlet
Jo Anna Marley, Capital A Creations
 Valerie Belusko, MCEDC,
 Claire Eskew, MarkNet Alliance

Joe Gasparich, EMS
 Kendra Wright, Red Rooster Inn
 Betty Doke, Women in Ag Protect the Harvest
Logan Altenberger, Altenberger Arbitrage
 Amy Tarr, Midland Institute
 Jorgia Crowe, JCO Salon
 Kent Aumann, Aumann Realty
 Brandi Lentz, Montgomery County Realty
 Brent Engelman, MSF & W Consulting Inc.
 John Wright, Software Engineer



BOARD MEMBERS

The 2021-2022 Advisory Board is made up of business leaders and investors in the community who provide oversight and enhancements to the CEO program.

Logan Altenberger, Altenberger Arbitrage
 Patty Clarke, First National Bank of Raymond
 Nathan Clementz, Country Companies
 Bruce Compton, Catholic Health Association
 Katie Duncan, Hillsboro Area Hospital
 Juletta Ellis, Litchfield High School
 Claire Eskew, MarkNet Alliance

Heather Hampton+Knodle, Knodle Ltd.
 Caleb Kirkpatrick, Lincolnwood High School
 Hope McBrain, Hillsboro CUSD 3
 Rachelle McDowell, Nokomis High School
 Nathan Potts, Patton & Company, PC
 Patrick Ward, Bank of Hillsboro
 Jonathan Weyer, Atlas 46



MONTGOMERY CEO

CREATING ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES



PLEDGE CARD

If you are interested in supporting the Montgomery CEO Class by becoming a Business Partner Investor, please use the form below. Thank you!

Business Contact: _____ Title: _____

Business Name: _____

Business Name (for recognition & marketing) _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

By checking below, I wish to financially support the Montgomery County CEO project by becoming an Investor or Friend of CEO:

\$3,000 total - paid \$1,000 per year over a three-year period

\$3,000 paid in full

Friend of CEO Please check here if you wish to be invoiced

Signature _____



Montgomery CEO is a program to develop young people's professional and workplace skills in Montgomery County, Illinois. All donations to the Montgomery CEO Program are tax deductible charitable gifts to the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to building a brighter future for Montgomery County, Illinois. Please mail your donation to the Montgomery CEO Program bookkeeper:

Jeff Eickhoff - CEO Program, White & Associates
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