



2025

ANNUAL

REPORT

creating entrepreneurial opportunities

LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Nathan Potts

Board Chair

10 Years! CEO has been operating in Montgomery County for a decade! As we look ahead to year 11 of supporting young entrepreneurs in Montgomery County with excitement, we cannot help but look back on the past decade of achievement.

Over the decade, we have graduated 112 students from the program who have each created their own successful business while taking part in the annual class business. Some of these businesses still operate in our county today! We have visited countless companies and entrepreneurs who have given our students a "behind the scenes" look at the business landscape of our county.

We have been blessed with 3 extraordinary facilitators who have gone above and beyond throughout our existence. Ryan Follis, Jodi Reynolds and now Logan Altenberger, Montgomery CEO class of 2019, who is entering his 3rd year as our facilitator. We are fortunate to have Logan guiding our CEOs.

While faces leading our program have changed, the support the CEO program continues to receive from our community is overwhelming.

The year was filled with guest speakers, company tours, and collaborative assignments. Our CEOs culminating act was our annual CEO Marketplace held at the SCI Center in Litchfield. The CEOs were able to showcase their individual businesses which ranged from agricultural drone spraying to youth sports training. We awarded several of our current CEOs with scholarships made possible by our investors while introducing the incoming class of 7 CEOs. Of which, 2 from Hillsboro HS, 3 from Nokomis HS and 2 from Lincolnwood HS.

One thing that has been constant over the years...the support from YOU. This amazing program could not happen without the investment of time and financial resources from our county. The difference you are making in our community will ripple through in ways we can't imagine. From our investors to mentors to business tour hosts and beyond, THANK YOU.

Gotta run!

Nathan Potts, Chairman, Montgomery CEO

LETTER FROM THE FACILITATOR

That's a wrap on year ten of Montgomery CEO! Our program has existed for ten years, and I have had the pleasure of going through the program myself in addition to facilitating for two of those years. Facilitating this program has been such a rewarding experience, and I am so grateful to see the impact it has on our students and on our community. The 2024-2025 year was no exception. We had another year of student growth - both in business and personal life.



Logan Altenberger
Facilitator

The Montgomery CEO Class of 2025 was comprised of 11 students, with all 4 of our schools in Montgomery County being represented. We had 4 from Hillsboro, 4 from Litchfield, 2 from Nokomis, and 1 from Raymond. Each of these team members saw positive transformation over the year, through various experiences. Team members visited 40+ businesses, started several team-based businesses, and each started their own personal business.

The class business this year was The Southern Showdown. Our young professionals took charge of organizing a successful community event at The Event Center of Montgomery County. The Southern Showdown was a night of entertainment - with live music, dancing, and minigame competitions, as well as delicious food from Niemerg's Catering. The CEO team had a profitable and well-attended event that taught them great lessons to implement in their personal business and beyond.

As I look back on all of these years, I am filled with gratitude for how this program has impacted 100+ students and countless others. Anytime I talk to someone about Montgomery CEO, the response is the same - "I wish we would've had something like that in High School". This program is so special, and it is not possible without our investors and community support. Thank you for your support in making it happen for ten years. We are excited for the next ten!

Sincerely,

Logan Altenberger
Facilitator, Montgomery CEO

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 Montgomery CEO class for future students. Investors also contribute their time to the program. Hosting business visits, provide guest speakers and serving as mentors. All crucial to the success of Montgomery CEO.

INVESTOR LIST

Hillsboro Health
Sullivans Drugs
Aumann Auctions
Borgic Farms
Hurst Rosche
Litchfield National Bank
White & Associates
The Journal News
MLH Futures
First National Bank of Litchfield
Patton & Company
First National Bank
Worksaver, Inc
M&M Service

INVESTOR LIST

Niemann Farms
Victory Lane
HSHS Hospital
First Community Bank of Hillsboro
Hayes Abrasives
Ronk Electrical
Country Financial - Jessica Chappellear
First National Bank of Nokomis
Constitution Bank
Bank & Trust Company
Knodle LTD
Computer Techniques LLC
Farmers Grain Litchfield
Montgomery County Farm Bureau

MENTOR LIST

Jill Ulrici
Dylan Richter
Jodi Reynolds
Dillon Clark

MENTOR LIST

Ryan Follis
Sarah McConnell
Tommy Justison
Tim Ulrici

MENTOR LIST

Brayden Helgen
Heather Greenwood
Jessica Chappalear



Natalie Brownback - Sweet Alchemy

Sweet Alchemy offers a variety of luxury cakes, cupcakes, cookies, and cakepops for any and all occasions that are sure to be the talk of the dessert table! It can be hard to find desserts that incorporate a flavor aspect and a visual aspect, but here at Sweet Alchemy, the flavor and appearance will make you go back for more!

Bond Knodle - Knodle Aerial Solutions

Knodle Aerial Solutions offers agricultural drone spraying and spreading using a DJI Agras T40 Agricultural drone. Knodle Aerial Solutions can spray fungicides and insecticides. KAS can also cover crops and seed via aerial spreading.



Caitlyn Travis - Fashion Rewritten

Fashion Rewritten is a podcast and digital platform dedicated to promoting sustainable fashion. Through Fashion Rewritten, I aim to educate audiences about the critical importance of sustainability within the fashion industry, the detrimental impacts of fast fashion, and practical ways to shop ethically and responsibly.

Cooper Poggenpohl - Mid Illinois Wheels

Mid Illinois Wheels is a buy-and-sell business specializing in used 8x180 wheels for heavy duty trucks. We find motivated sellers who need quick, fair offers with truck owners and enthusiasts looking for high-quality wheels at affordable prices. By focusing on the 8x180 bolt pattern, we cater directly to owners of GM and Chevy HD trucks, a segment often underserved in the used wheel market. Our goal is to create a fast, reliable, and trustworthy supplier for people to buy and sell wheels without hassle.





Frankie Koniak - True Self Values

TSV (True Self Values) is a streetwear brand built on the idea of staying true to yourself and your values, rather than trying to fit in. It's about embracing individuality and expressing who you are with confidence. Our designs reflect authenticity, self-respect, and the freedom to stand out.

Cyarett Hale - Clean as Hale

Clean as Hale offers comprehensive exterior detailing and maintenance services to residential and commercial clients. With a range of services, including power washing, lawn care, window washing, and gutter cleaning, we aim to provide clients with pristine properties and well-maintained landscapes. Based in Litchfield, IL, Clean as Hale distinguishes itself by taking special requests to meet clients' specific needs.



Jackson Tuetken - Rising Stars

Rising Stars is a premier sports lessons business focused on training young athletes in multiple sports, including football, basketball, baseball, and soccer. Our mission is to develop skills, confidence, and discipline in young athletes while fostering a love for sports. We aim to provide high-quality training through professional coaching, structured programs, and a supportive environment.



Natalee Fenton - The Resale Vault

The Resale Vault is a place to buy a variety of gently used clothing, for a cheap price. As of right now, this business is based on Facebook, but I am in the process of looking into other online sources to get my page out to more areas, and hope to expand with a physical trailer setup.





Prestyn Buzick - Buzick Built Kustoms

Buzick Built Kustoms is a car audio customization service specializing in high-quality sound system installations, including subwoofers, door speakers, and amplifiers. Our goal is to be the top car audio customization provider in Central Illinois, offering expert installations, high-quality products, and exceptional customer service.

Shelby Kaliyan - Kaliyan Detailing

Kaliyan Detailing is a mobile detailing business for vehicles, large to small. I provide interior and exterior cleaning and I hope to expand my services to provide even more options for my clients. We pride ourselves on great service at an affordable price.



Tyzen Thacker - Thacker Excavating

Thacker Excavating is a leading provider of comprehensive excavation and earthwork solutions for both residential and commercial projects. Specializing in site preparation, grading, trenching, land clearing, drainage, and demolition, we help clients create solid foundations for their construction projects.



An important piece of the CEO experience is visiting local businesses and hearing from guest speakers in Montgomery County. People drive by these locations daily without recognizing their contribution to economic development of the area. The group walks away with a changed mindset, never viewing the business the same way again.

- Alpha Candles
- Dylan Richter
- Litchfield Salvation Army
- Que One Seven
- The Annex
- Kim Lipe - Fit Bodies 4 Life
- Atlas 46
- Kismet Coffee
- Valerie Belusko
- Heather Hampton+Knodle
- CTI
- Midwest Bus Sales
- M&M Services
- Poogan's Creamery
- Raise the Bar
- Ryan Follis
- The ToyRoom
- Eisentraut Theaters
- Patton & Co
- McKay Auto Parts
- Millikin University
- The Briar Rose
- The Sweet Spot
- Lilly Fender
- The Story Emporium





The Journal News

Bri's Beehive

Pizza Man

Glenn & West

Sloan Implement

The Milkhouse

Just a Dad YouTube

Short Furniture

Tommy Justison

MCR Realty Professionals

Creekstone Kettleworks

Ronk Electrical

Kingdom Auto

Domenic Macera

E&G Construction

Jodi Reynolds

Miranda Adams

Rob Clarke

Aumann Auctions

Dunns and Roses

Montgomery County Farm Bureau

The Historic Red Rooster

Route 66 Museum & Welcome
Center

Country Financial - Jessica

Chappalear

Borgic Farms

IGA

1st Phorm

Grace Meat & Three

Companion Bakery

THE SOUTHERN SHOWDOWN

Each year, CEO team members develop their own class business as a team. This year, team members put on an exciting night of dinner and music - The Southern Showdown!

The team worked with each other and with various groups to put together a night of dinner and entertainment - live music, delicious food, and several fun competitive games. This event was well-attended and profitable! The team was able to generate over \$10,000 in revenue and over \$4,000 in profit, which turned into seed money for their personal businesses!

They held this event at The Event Center of Montgomery County in January of 2025. The team strategically picked this venue for location, functionality, and price.

The team learned many lessons through this process, including the importance of teamwork and putting together a high-quality event under pressure.



BOARD MEMBERS



Nathan Potts
Patton & Co



Patrick Ward
Bank of Hillsboro



Hope McBrain
Hillsboro School
District



**Jessica
Chappellear**
Country Financial



Mike Fleming
Litchfield National
Bank



Patty Clarke
First National Bank of
Raymond



Juletta Ellis
Litchfield High
School



Dana Schott
Lincolnwood High School



Katie Duncan
Hillsboro Health



Jodi Reynolds
MarkNet



Lisa DeWerff
Nokomis High School

WE NEED COMMUNITY-MINDED INDIVIDUALS LIKE YOU.

CEO is free for students and schools. The program relies on local investors to support this transformative learning experience.

INVEST IN TOMORROW, TODAY.

By helping us connect our young people with local businesses and area leaders, you are making a direct impact on the workforce and leaders of tomorrow.



AS AN INVESTOR, YOU RECEIVE:

- Name/Logo Recognition on CEO Website
- Social Media Acknowledgement
- First Rights to host/visit the class



"The CEO experience has been life changing for me. I learned a lot of skills I wouldn't have been able to gather otherwise and I feel more prepared for my future. CEO opened up more doors for me than any other opportunity ever has."



"CEO is so much more than how to run a business. It is teaching students the life skills and all of the things that go into being successful in any career path you choose. It exposes all of our students to what endless opportunities are right here in our backyard."



"In 20+ years in economic development, the chamber of commerce and the economic development corporation, CEO has been the most beneficial most gratifying program I have been involved with. "