

IN THE NEWS



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By: Stacey Anderson

Crypto-mining student business honored with \$10,000 award

JKALAMAZOO, Mich.—Western Michigan University student entrepreneur Payton Walker, founder of CryptoShovel, recently won the Brian Patrick Thomas Entrepreneurial Spirit Award totaling \$10,000. The award recognizes students in Starting Gate, Western Michigan University's business accelerator, and specifically honors companies that have a great business model and a higher social purpose.

Walker, a 2023 finance graduate from Mattawan, Michigan, has big plans for the business. "CryptoShovel is focused on building and operating low-energy crypto-mining systems. We are currently raising seed capital to launch our data center development company, SHUVL SOLUTIONS LLC, with the long-term goal of becoming a major player in the industry while promoting a greener solution to crypto mining. We are committed to providing sustainable and efficient mining solutions for our diverse client base."

Walker's ambitions to own his own business harken back to childhood. From an early age, he had a deep passion for entrepreneurship that has guided him. Starting with a successful duct tape wallet business in middle school, he found fulfillment in delivering value to customers. In high school, he designed and sold a clothing line based on student news. "My experiences in entrepreneurship fueled my desire for autonomy, innovation and the opportunity to positively impact others," he says.

And he found the perfect resource to support his entrepreneurial pursuits in college, WMU's Starting Gate.

"The workshops and support from Starting Gate have been pivotal in facilitating my transition from being a student to becoming a successful entrepreneur," he notes. "I found a supportive environment where I could openly discuss the ups and downs of my business journey with fellow participants and connect with guest speakers who shared their insights."

Calling the Starting Gate experience and this award "transformative," Walker credits Tamara Davis, director of Starting Gate and instructor in the Department of Management, and Sarah Forrest, business consultant in the Michigan Small Business Development Center, with helping him take his drive to succeed to the next level.

"Tamara and Sarah have been instrumental in providing me with the necessary structure and vision to keep moving forward," he says. "They facilitated opportunities to connect with mentors, allowing me to gain valuable external perspectives that have greatly contributed to my growth as a business owner. I am also grateful to them for encouraging me to step out of my comfort zone and develop my skills in public speaking, enabling me to effectively communicate and represent my business."

"Payton has grown exponentially this past year using the Starting Gate program to sharpen his pitch and communicate the value proposition of his company to investors and the entrepreneurial community," says Davis. "Not only has Payton enhanced his abilities, but he has also been a mentor to several of the Starting Gate student teams. Payton has been a true asset to the program." For more information about Oldham and how the Michigan SBDC can help your business,

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visit michigansbdc.org.

ABOUT CRYPTOSHOVEL

CryptoShovel is a crypto-mining company focused on building and operating low-energy mining systems. The company is currently raising seed capital to launch its mining development company, SHUVL SOLUTIONS LLC, with the long-term goal of becoming a major player in the industry while promoting a greener solution to crypto mining. CryptoShovel is committed to providing sustainable and efficient mining solutions for its client base. The company's mining systems consume up to 13 times less power than comparable alternatives. Additionally, the business actively engages with and supports the Southwest Michigan tech community, demonstrating its dedication to local growth and highlighting the talent in the region. To contact student entrepreneur Payton Walker to learn more about the business, email payton@cryptoshovel.app.

ABOUT THE AWARD

Established in 2015, the Brian Patrick Thomas Entrepreneurial Spirit Award is awarded to eligible participants in the Starting Gate business accelerator program. The goal of the award is to recognize individuals who not only establish viable businesses but who look beyond themselves to motivate and move teams of people to a common cause with a higher social purpose. Thomas, a WMU business alum and CEO who has been recognized with several awards for his leadership, has a passion for entrepreneurial thinking and social entrepreneurship, which sparked his desire to establish this award to support student entrepreneurs.

ABOUT STARTING GATE

Starting Gate is a student business accelerator that gives students rich and valuable resources to develop their startup companies. It is located in downtown Kalamazoo and operated by the Haworth College of Business Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. The accelerator is open to all Western students through a competitive application process in which students must demonstrate a promising idea for a product or service, which can be launched within a short period of time. The accelerator will be accepting applications beginning in July 2023 for its next class of student entrepreneurs. Visit the Starting Gate website to learn more and apply.