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SAGINAW AND BAY CITY NEWS

Saginaw Soup winners take home \$3K in prizes. See who they are.

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Saginaw Soup winners, (from left) Cherina Johnson, Crystal Parker and Otis Jackson III, pose for a photo with their prizes after the Thursday, Nov. 2, 2023 Saginaw Soup business pitch competition at CMURC Saginaw, 203 S. Washington Ave. (Liz Propp | MLive.com) Liz Propp | MLive.com



By [Liz Propp](#) | [mlive.com](#)

SAGINAW, MI – For the second time this year, three Saginaw entrepreneurs have been named winners of the bi-annual Saginaw Soup business pitch competition.

The competition, which began in 2020, allows entrepreneurs, businesses and non-profit organizations to win cash prizes and other resources, such as pop-up shops at the SVRC Marketplace and business coaching.

About 45 people gathered at CMURC, inside the SVRC Marketplace, 203 S. Washington Ave. in downtown Saginaw, on Thursday, Nov. 2, to hear business pitches presented to a panel of judges.

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Five entrepreneurs, who were finalists at the event, were given seven minutes to pitch their business ideas.

First place and a \$2,000 prize went to Cherina Johnson and her business, Upstairs Resale Shop, which showcases 3-D printed fidget toys and gadgets.

“I would like to congratulate all the other pitch competition participants that presented this evening to share about their businesses and making it to the end of this process,” Johnson said.

Crystal Parker, founder of Prom in the City, took second place, winning \$1,500 and the People’s Choice Award, which consisted of money collected at the door.

Prom in the City has been organizing proms for people of all ages with special needs since 2015. The group’s next prom takes place Saturday, May 4, at Kochville Hall, 3265 Kochville Road.

Otis Jackson III, founder of 3x Digital Marketing, was awarded third place and a weekend pop-up at the SVRC Marketplace to showcase his business.

The other ideas and the entrepreneurs who pitched them were Michigan Forensic Examiners by Lindsey Bulgrien and Zoey Roberts Haircare by Dr. Ashley Sanders.

The Saginaw Soup pitch competition, sponsored by Huntington Bank and a collaborative effort of [Saginaw DDA](#), [city of Saginaw](#), [CMURC](#), [SEDC](#), [Saginaw Future](#) and [Michigan SBDC](#) aims to support and encourage entrepreneurship in Saginaw County.

Entrepreneurs had to provide an overview of their business idea, identify their target market and conduct a competitive analysis, provide a three-year financial projection and how they would spend the prize money, along with how it would impact their business.

Judging the presentations were Saginaw Mayor Brenda Moore, Andrew Lay with Hierographx, Former Saginaw Soup winner Shawndrika Pullium and MLive/The Saginaw News Editor Bob Johnson.

They listened to each presentation, asking questions before picking the winners. Audience members also weighed in by casting votes for the People’s Choice award.

Have an idea you would like to present at a future Saginaw Soup event? Keep an eye on the Saginaw Soup [Facebook page](#) for announcement of the next event to take place in 2024.

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