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SAGINAW AND BAY CITY NEWS

Local entrepreneurs win nearly \$12K in 2025 Business by the Bay Pitch Competition

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A stage microphone is seen in this MLive file photo. Business by the Bay Pitch Competition finalists received cash prizes totaling \$11,750 after giving presentations during a Nov. 12 event at John Glenn High School in Bangor Township. MLive.com



By **Advance Local Express Desk**

BANGOR TWP, MI – Five Bay County entrepreneurs took the stage at the John Glenn High School auditorium in Bangor Township on Wednesday, Nov. 12, to pitch their ventures in the 2025 Business by the Bay Pitch Competition, with \$11,750 in cash prizes on the line.

The Michigan Small Business Development Center hosted the competition, which drew finalists who had spent weeks preparing through SBDC-led workshops before presenting to judges and a live audience.

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Malynnda Stewart, owner of Compassionate Navigation LLC, took first place and \$5,000 for her services supporting families and caregivers through health care and life transitions.

Lily Boehm of Curious Minds Club earned second place and \$3,500 for her educational program designed to foster creativity and exploration in young learners. Ashley Kirby, creator of Turkey Bob Books, secured third place and \$1,500.

Jennifer Barcia's Sweets and Boujee won both fourth place and the Fan Favorite Award, earning her \$1,000 total for her dessert and treat business. Maria Sian of Great Lakes Healthcare Training Center rounded out the finalists with \$750 for her work in health care education and workforce development.

"We've seen a lot of growth in these contestants from the beginning of this process to the end," Michelle Judd, SBDC consultant and organizer of the pitch competition, said in a statement. "Their ideas, determination, and passion for community growth truly embody the spirit of Business by the Bay."

The free, public event drew strong community attendance. Guests networked while enjoying refreshments and voted in the fan-favorite contest.

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The Michigan SBDC Lake Huron Region organized the competition with support from presenting sponsor Huntington Bank, ROI sponsor Bay County Growth Alliance, and startup sponsors United Bay Community Credit Union, Wildfire Credit Union, and Independent Bank. Additional support came from Thumb Bank, Isabella Bank, and Bay Area Chamber.

The Michigan SBDC provides no-cost consulting, training, and market research to small businesses statewide.

Generative AI was used to organize information for this story, based on data provided by the Michigan Small Business Development Center. It was reviewed and edited by local MLive staff.

Advance Local Express Desk

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