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Local entrepreneurs pitch business dreams for a chance to win cash



By [Trae Harris](#)

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BAY CITY, Mich. (WNEM) – Five entrepreneurs stepped into the spotlight, pitching their business dreams for a better shot at making them come true.

The Business By the Bay Pitch Competition is helping small businesses think big, a part of a growing effort in Bay County to turn ideas into jobs.

After all the pitches and applause in the John Glenn High School auditorium, one walked away a little richer. The business owners had a shot at \$11,500 in cash prizes.

“It’s going to do so much for this community,” said Malynnda Stewart, CEO of Compassionate Navigation. “I’m really excited to get started.”

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Each finalist spent weeks perfecting their business plans through training with the Michigan Small Business Development Center, from crafting financials to fine-tuning their presentations.

“We’ve seen a lot of growth in these contestants, from the beginning of this process to the end,” said Michelle Judd, Small Business Consultant at Michigan Small Business Development Center. “It wasn’t a quick process.”

The finalists ranged from healthcare to children’s books, stem clubs and even sweet treats, each bringing a different flavor of innovation to the stage.

“We had a great time doing this whole event,” said Ashley Kirby, founder of Turkey Bob Books. “They do a really good job at the SBDC, and they’re really good at supporting entrepreneurs.”

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In the end, Compassionate Navigation took home the top prize, but all left with new connections and a boost of momentum for their growing businesses.

“Amazing, amazing, this money is going to not only help my company, but we have so many ideas of how we can help underfunded organizations,” said Stewart.

Organizers say they’re considering hosting next year’s competition during the summer



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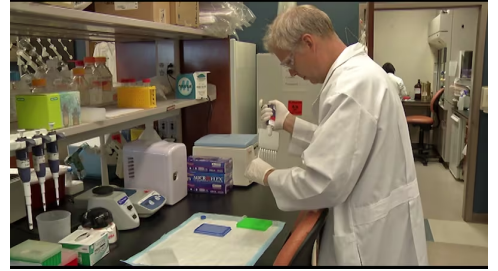
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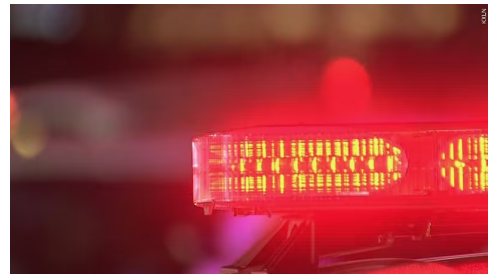
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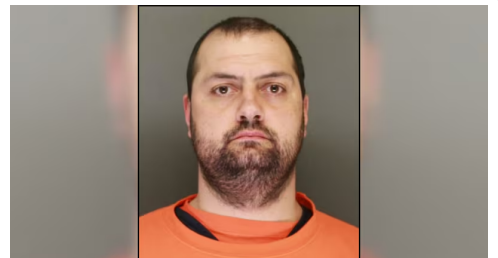
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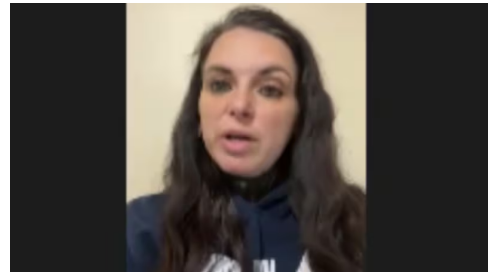


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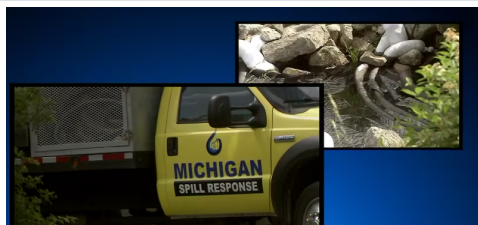
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