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### Youth Entrepreneurs Build New Business Ideas

Ord, NE: Twenty-two inventive youth launched new businesses during a four day Entrepreneurship Innovation Camp conducted last week in Valley County. The free event featured opportunities to learn about individual strengths, meet local entrepreneurs and learn about their businesses, work with financial advisors to review business plans, and sell their new products at a market place event on the courthouse square! Campers also enjoyed delicious lunches and snacks from local caterers and restaurants. The camp was made possible through grants from the Valley County Community Foundation Fund-Hometown Competitiveness Endowment, the Wozab Memorial Fund, and the Governor's Ag Excellence Award.



ESI (Entrepreneurship Investigation) Camp encourages kids to explore their personalities, talents and hobbies and learn how to turn those interests into a business idea. Campers are also challenged to think about business needs in their communities and how to market local businesses on a global scale.



Campers spent the first day touring local businesses and job shadowing business owners. For this hands-on experience, campers chose one of five businesses including Misko Sports, Blank Slate, Valley Fire Pottery, Creative Designs, and AJ Cetak's Meat Market. After the tours, campers enjoyed lunch at Blank Slate. Then the group visited the Valley County Economic Development/Ord Area Chamber Offices. Caleb Pollard introduced kids to the [www.ordnebraska.com](http://www.ordnebraska.com) and [www.visitvalleycounty.com](http://www.visitvalleycounty.com) websites and engaged the youth in a discussion about the importance of marketing through websites, e-commerce and social media; and practicing exceptional customer service. The group also discussed the unique qualities of our area and benefits of living and working in rural Nebraska. Campers ended the day by exploring what it takes to transform an idea into a product or service and creating their new business ventures.

Expanding on the first day's experiences, campers took a crash course in business basics and prepared the products to start their new businesses. The kids were introduced to the financials and marketing involved with running a business as they calculated expenses versus income and created business flyers and other promotional materials. Campers also enjoyed visiting with a panel of real life entrepreneurs and learned why these business owners have chosen rural Nebraska as their home. The guest panel included Kelly Kreger (The Normal Roasting Company), Randy Dobbins (Dobbins Service Center), Larry Harbour (LB Custom Chrome and Detailing) and Dr. Sheri Sandoz (Ord Veterinary Clinic). Next, campers presented their business plans to local bankers and received seed money to purchase the materials needed to produce their new products. Production was in full swing! All of the campers worked very hard to create the unique products that would kick-start their businesses at the market place!

On the final morning, the group learned about the importance of customer service and prepared pricing sheets and order forms, receipt books and cash boxes. At noon it was Show Time! Campers set up booths on the Courthouse square displaying their products for sale, offering squirrel feeders, wind chimes, yard games, duct tape wallets, hand-crafted jewelry, magnets, and hair accessories, golf ball key chains, decorative coasters, signs and trivets, potted flowers, themed gift baskets, woven placemats, hand-painted fishing lures and more! Numerous community members and families joined the campers at the Market Place to purchase products and celebrate the campers' hard work and new businesses!

"The highlight of the week for campers was selling their new products at the Market Place! It was exciting to see our community celebrating youth and business with their show of support at the Market Place event. There were many valuable connections and partnerships developed among youth, business leaders, service organizations and the community throughout the week! Now we are working on additional ways to support these young entrepreneurs so they can further develop their new ventures and create sustainable businesses. Campers are invited to participate in additional selling opportunities at the local Farmer's Market, the Valley County Fair, and the Nebraska State Fair. We wish these young innovative entrepreneurs bountiful success with their new businesses!" said Dahn Hagge, Valley County Community Foundation Fund Coordinator, who helped organize and facilitate the ESI Discovery Camp.



ESI is an award-winning entrepreneurship curriculum developed in 2005 through a partnership with the Nebraska Community Foundation's HomeTown Competitiveness, the Nebraska Department of Education, UNL Extension and others. Instructors at the camp included UNL Extension Educators, Kayla Hinrichs, Heather DePra and Connie Hancock and Ord High School business teacher, Derry Trampe. UNL Extension interns Tyler Spilnek and Kaelen Lagasse and Valley County Community Foundation Fund Coordinator Dahn Hagge also assisted with instruction during the camp. Project partners are committed to providing this camp as an annual opportunity for area youth!