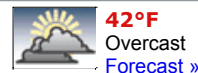


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Youth About Business gives budding entrepreneurs a heads-up

By NANCY DEVILLE
Staff Writer

BORDEAUX — At 16, Paige Caldwell already has been given an early glimpse of how the world of business operates.

As a corporate treasurer with the Youth About Business program, which has its headquarters in the Bordeaux neighborhood of west Nashville, Paige is learning to master budgeting and accounting.

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Youth About Business is a program that teaches youths ages 10-18 how to successfully run their own companies.

"The program has really opened my eyes, and I plan to be an entrepreneur, and I think I want to own a law firm," said Paige, a sophomore at University School of Nashville.

YAB operates four programs including a mentoring program that allows students to shadow local business owners. The Entrepreneurial Training Program teaches youths the mechanics of running a business. Ownership Management is for

15-year-olds to operate several small companies, referred to as training centers. A summer business camp, held at Vanderbilt University and also at New York's Columbia University, allows students to do mock mergers and acquisitions and business transitions.

The organization also operates several small businesses, which are called training centers, where youths learn the ropes of management. The businesses include a specialty company that sells custom-made products, YAB Real Estate Co. that teaches kids about lease agreements and land investments, and a retail-training store in Murfreesboro.

YAB members have done all planning — from marketing to budgeting — for the nonprofit organization's 13th annual banquet that will be tonight at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center. During tonight's event, the year's record-breaking revenues will be announced. Last year YAB produced \$660,000 in program service revenue from its training centers. This year the nonprofit surpassed that amount within nine months, officials said.

"Before I joined the program, I had no interest in business," Paige said. "My aunt invited me to the Youth About Business annual banquet, and I was really impressed with the things the children were working on and all that they had accomplished. "When I attended my first meeting, I realized that everything was all in our hands — we handle everything, and it gives us an opportunity to experience what it's going to be like in real life. I can



enlarge

Students at the Youth About Business program work on business projects. Jasmine Goodman, 16, right, a research analyst for the Investment Club, researches mutual funds as Peter Cleggett, 15, the Investment Club president, organizes and tabulates the mutual fund findings and Paige Caldwell, 16, the corporation treasurer, creates a database for an upcoming banquet. (BILLY KINGSLEY / STAFF)

UPCOMING EVENT

The Youth About Business will have its 13th annual banquet 6-9 p.m. today in the Tennessee Ballroom of Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center.

The winners of the inaugural National YAB Summer Camp competition will be announced, along with this year's training center revenues.

Tickets are \$50, and corporate sponsorship packages are available.

For more information on the banquet or the YAB program, call 299-8097 or visit www.youthaboutbusiness.org>Youth About Business recently received Bank of America's Second Annual Neighborhood Excellence Initiative award for contributions to the community.

Two Nashville nonprofit organizations received this year's Neighborhood Builders award. The grant, which also was given to YMCA of Middle Tennessee's Y-Build program, provides each organization with \$200,000 for operation support over a two-year period and a one-year leadership training program for current and emerging leaders. YAB will use its grant for business development and to hire a development director and an operations officer. YMCA will be able to double the number of young men it serves from 30 to 60.

Members of the local selection committee were: John Stein, Dave Briggs and Mark Thomas McQueen, Bank of America; Kitty Emery, MBK Entertainment LLC; MaryAnne Howland, Ibis Communications Inc.; Mike Neal, Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, and Jerry Williams, Leadership Nashville.

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have an intelligent conversation with an entrepreneur and really know what they are talking about."

The students spend one-on-one time with local business owners and executives to learn about business during Vanderbilt's business camp. Other executives spend their time teaching youths about financial statements, lease agreements and business management on Saturdays at the YAB training center on West Hamilton Avenue, just off Clarksville Pike.

Since its inception in 1992, the program has provided nearly 2,000 students real-life experience in the business world. Youth About Business has now established its first national training model, will launch a similar program in New York and plans to establish others in Chicago and Philadelphia.

What began as an initiative to help underserved youths by teaching them business skills since has expanded to attract students from all Nashville communities, President Sam Kirk said.

"I was just tired of us losing our children, and I wanted young people to have a unique alternative to help them learn success principles to learn how to compete in America," Kirk said of founding the organization 13 years ago after 17 years with Southwestern Co.

"Young people are excited about learning this type of real-life training because it creates an engaged learning environment," he said. "They do a lot of things that most people don't get exposed to before running a business.

"I like the students to leave the program more business-literate and with a level of confidence that they can accomplish and achieve some really exciting goals for their lives."

Jasmine Goodman has been apart of Youth About Business for the past five years. The Hunters Lane High School junior is a research analyst where she is now studying mutual funds.

"Through Youth About Business I've learned how to work hard, have self control and manage money and a lot about accounting and payroll," the 16-year-old said. "It's broken down on a level where kids can understand how to maneuver the business world.

"It's ideal for those who are willing to work hard and not looking for the easy way out and those who want to strive and have a good business life."

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