Clayton County Youth Learn How to Become Entrepreneurs
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Research indicates that more than 70% of high school students have an interest in owning their own business. Researchers and educators have found that entrepreneurship training encourages students to use sophisticated mathematics and science concepts in real-life situations, improving academic performance. Additional studies suggest that students enrolled in entrepreneurship education programs have better attendance, are less likely to drop out, and show more ambitious goals for life after high school.

For the second summer in a row, Clayton County Cooperative Extension (4-H) and the Archway Partnership coordinated a Youth Entrepreneur Workshop. The workshop was a one-day event, provided free to students due to the generous donations of community partners. Workshop topics included: Marketing a Business, Finding Funding to Start a Business, How to Start a Small Business, Business Success Strategies, and Resources for Your Business. The workshop included an introduction to Clayton State University (CSU) presented by a representative from the student recruitment office. Other speakers for the program included two representatives from the UGA Small Business Development Center, a business teacher from a local high school, a motivational speaker, a representative of the Chamber of Commerce, a business owner, and a high school student (4-H’er) who has started his own business. Each participant received a copy of a 140-page book from the Georgia Small Business Development Center Network entitled, “How to Start a Business — A Guide for Georgia Entrepreneurs.”

Twenty-three 7th through 12th grade students participated in the one-day training. Seven high schools and five middle schools were represented. In addition to the instruction they received, participants took part in an extended group exercise. During this exercise they applied the information they learned by developing an idea for a business and identifying the challenges they might face in starting a business.

One student stated that the most valuable thing he learned at the workshop was that his attitude and professionalism impacts his career. Other students noted the importance of getting an education, having the necessary funding and business development tools, and conducting research in starting a business.

Advancing Community Priorities: Education has been identified as a priority of the Clayton County Archway Partnership Executive Committee since its inception in July 2008. The youth entrepreneur workshop was part of a strategic approach in partnering with higher education, local business and industry, community leaders and youth to offer instruction that complements their school curriculum, and provides an opportunity for students to gain additional skills to better prepare them to enter the workforce or advance to higher education.

Archway Partnership—Fact Sheet, 2010 ~ Volume 2, Number 9