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The Miami Times

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MIAMI, FLORIDA, J



Lessons in life



CAMP BUILDS LOCAL YOUTH'S CHARACTER, ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

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Having an idea for a business, pitching your idea to potential investors, and figuring out how you intend to market your services to future customers may sound like the type of tasks that only eager adults undertake, but for the youth who attended the 501 c non-profit organization's Parafruit Education 2012 summer camp, such [tasks] are merely regular part of their day.

Ray Parris founded the non-profit, Parafruit Education, to teach children how to win at business.

On Thursday, July 12th, 15 campers ranging from first through ninth graders, presented their business plans to a panel of judges to determine whose idea was best.

The competition was the culmination of

Parafruit Education's seven week youth summer camp.

For the last five years, the camp, which accepts first through ninth graders, has taught its students the various aspects of starting and maintaining a business. Campers also took field trips to local businesses and received lectures from business owners to learn first hand the hardships and joys of being an entrepreneur.

This year's business competition winner included Maryum Falin whose art and graphics idea won for best overall business plan and Rayhana Parris who presented the best 30 second pitch for her idea for a recycling center business.

When asked why she came up with the business idea, Parris responded "Because it helps the Earth and I want it to stay clean."

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Symbol and guide for the life of today's youth

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Meanwhile, Rickey Wright, Yasin Parris, and Khalid Salim placed first, second, and third respectively in the chess competition.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENTREPRENEURS

"Para means 'for' in spanish and fruit is a symbol of life," explained Parris. "It's basi-

cally giving life in empowering young kids with a vision and dream to do unique things in business."

With that in mind, Parris established Parafruit Education to teach children using financial literacy, the fine arts and technology. The organization teaches these skills by having youth learn and master video production, music production, internet entrepreneurship, graphic and web design and

even creative writing. Skills that Parris knows from personal experience that can benefit individuals as children and well into adulthood.

"I grew up drawing as a young kid and had started my own business at a young age," explained Parris, whose skills also allowed the Virgin Islands native to win a scholarship to Miami's New World School of the Arts.

Since then Parris has con-

tinued to freelance as a visual and graphic design artist, while finishing his post graduate degrees and working as a renowned teacher in South Florida.

"If you find something that you love to do then you can turn it into a business. If we develop this passion [and business skills] in our kids then they can become the self sufficient thinkers in our society," Parris said.