

In The Know explores the “hidden gems” of Reston—people, places and things known to few people—and shares their stories with Reston newcomers so that everyone is “in the know.”



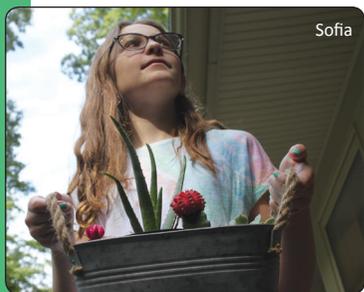
IN THE KNOW!

The Next Generation of Leaders

When my daughters were small, my husband videotaped them—from their first steps and first days of school to birthday parties, dance recitals, sports games and holiday celebrations; he captured it all, more than 100 hours of precious memories. However, as the girls grew older, we were challenged to watch their videos; the technology was nearly obsolete. My oldest daughter, Lauren, offered to digitize our tapes; 14 years old and a student at Hughes Middle School, she was eager to earn spending money. Word spread about her tape conversion project, so she launched The Digitizer (laurend03.wixsite.com/digitizer). Fast forward two years, she has a thriving business, spending money...and a savings account!

Lauren and other middle school, high school and college-age students are members of Generation Z, which is expected to be the most entrepreneurial generation ever. In survey results released by Entrepreneur Magazine earlier this year, “41% of the high school students plan to become entrepreneurs, and almost half believe they’ll invent something that changes the world.” These students are digital natives; tech-savvy and social media smart, they will leverage technology to solve problems and use YouTube, Instagram and Twitter to promote their business.

Making money is often the primary motivator for start-up businesses; however, young entrepreneurs are also fueled by creativity and inspired by other business owners. For example, Sofia, a rising 8th grader at Rachel Carson Middle School, started Made with Love (IG@skmadewithlove) with a friend who shared her dream to provide high-quality yet affordable handmade accessories, gifts and room décor. Their most popular item is succulents planted in unique containers like vintage tea cups. Her twin brother, Brogan, a rising 8th grader at Ideaventions Academy for Mathematics and Science, Reston, VA, witnessed her success and established Brogan Creates, building custom woodworking and 3D printed items. His hexagon shelves make great wall displays.



If your child is like Lauren, Sofia and Brogan, and you want to support their interest in starting a business, consider signing them up for a local program such as the JA Company Program offered by Junior Achievement of Greater Washington in Fairfax or The Young Entrepreneur Business Fair. These programs provide education on business planning, budgeting, marketing, operations and sales as well as the opportunity to experience Shark Tank-like competitions and gain real-world practical experience critical for the next generation of successful business leaders.

Ashleigh Dorfman is a Reston mom of three daughters and enjoys exploring as well as writing about our community.

