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**Loudoun Chamber and Loudoun Economic Development Authority launch Young Entrepreneurs Academy to help local high school students create and start their own businesses**

***Lansdowne, VA* – The Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce and Loudoun Economic Development Authority are starting a local entrepreneurship training program that will match local business owners and leaders with high school aged students to help them formulate, develop and launch their own business or nonprofit organization.**

The **Young Entrepreneurs Academy (**YEA!) is a proven national program that partners with more than 110 local Chambers of Commerce in 39 states to provide hands on entrepreneurial training to students between grades 6 through 12.

YEA! was developed at the University of Rochester in 2004, with the support of a grant from the Kauffman Foundation, and today partners with the U.S, Chamber of Commerce to engage local chambers. YEA! has graduated more than 4,500 students since 2004, who have started more than 3,000 businesses and social movements!

“To be a successful entrepreneur requires a wide variety of skills and experience, assets that translate to any course of study or career path. The Loudoun Chamber and the Loudoun Economic Development Authority are proud launch the **Young Entrepreneurs Academy** to help Loudoun students translate the knowledge gained in the classroom into real businesses or social movements to affect change in their community,” said Chamber President Tony Howard.

“In my high school days, entrepreneurship was either mowing lawns or throwing newspapers. Today, the possibilities of the Internet coupled with the buying power of teens has produced limitless opportunities for our Loudoun youth to start real businesses,” said Brian Chavis, Chairman, **Loudoun Economic Development Authority.** “The EDA is very pleased to partner with the Chamber to create this exciting new program that will help produce a new generation of entrepreneurs here in Loudoun County.”

The Loudoun chapter of YEA! will begin this October at the Mason Enterprise Center in Leesburg. YEA! Is a 30-week program with weekly classes, field trips guest speakers, a trade show and a Pitch Event where the student entrepreneurs pitch their business plan to an Investment Panel for seed funding. At the end of the YEA! Program the students will have a legally registered business.

For more information, visit: <http://www.loudounchamber.org/YEA>.

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