

Celebrating Young Business

Kathleen Hay - Cornwall Standard-Freeholder

The business people of the future were celebrated for their accomplishments today on Monday.

Hosted by the Cornwall Business Enterprise Centre, local student entrepreneurs received financial fruits of their labours for participating in the Ontario High School Business Plan Competition.

The awards were presented at the Best Western Parkway Inn during a luncheon.

Jeremy Bellefeuille, founder of Cornwall4Rent.com, captured top spot to receive \$300, as well as a membership to Team Cornwall.

Runners-up were business owners Troy Lapierre of Summer Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, and Taylan Yu of Yu Designs, who each received \$200 prizes.

Bellefeuille will now proceed to the Eastern Regional competition held in the fall.

As well, Katelyn Irwin of Kanvas by Kate received the 2009 Summer Company Entrepreneur of the Year Award, plus a \$500 cash prize.

CBEC business consultant Alyssa Blais said there were eight participants in this year's Summer Company, up from five participants in 2008.

Participants receive \$1,500 to start-up their business, then are awarded another \$1,500 at the project's completion.

The program is run by the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. Qualified participants this summer included a variety of businesses ranging from online property rental website, to lawn care, tutoring and a pet spa.

"They're all brilliant," said Blais. "I'm really pleased with the caliber of businesses." "It's always amazing to see what come out of kids' energy."

Bellefeuille's idea of Cornwall4Rent.com came from his own family situation as his parents own a rental property. It can be a challenge for good landlords and tenants to link-up with each other, and the website offers this capability to make a good match.

“The convenience of being able to see a property that match the criteria person is looking for is huge,” said Bellefeuille, 17, who’s completing Grade 12 at Ecole secondaire La Citadelle this fall. “I’ve already purchased the domains and registered businesses for Kingston4Rent.com and Brockville4Rent.com.

“I’d be happy to hear from landlords interested in learning more about it.”

Those interested may reach him at Jeremy@cornwall4rent.com.

Irwin will be completing her final year at St. Lawrence College’s fine arts program in Brockville this fall. She plans to continue her education next year at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, then complete teacher’s college.

The 20-year-old’s business focuses on custom artwork and designs, including everything from portrait paintings to custom tattoo designs.

To say she was delighted would be an understatement. “I’m just so thrilled and honoured. This is wonderful, and it will go a long way towards my studies this fall,” Irwin said.