



MEDIA RELEASE

January 16, 2019

Student innovators take home cash for winning ideas

Saanich, BC — The South Island Prosperity Project (SIPP) and Island Savings, a division of First West Credit Union, teamed up to present the Future Innovator Challenge, a competition for high school and post-secondary students to help improve the quality of life for citizens of the region, and compete for seed funding for their projects.

On Sunday, two teams were declared the first-place winners in their categories and received \$1,500 each to fund their winning ideas.

The winning secondary-school project, HMU Sports, developed by Yassin Guitouni of Mount Douglas Secondary School, is a social networking app that reduces isolation and increases physical health by connecting young people through sport.

The winning post-secondary team, LUG (Audrey Wright, Cyrus Lee, Josh Desrochers, Magnus Kristensen, and Tyler Arseneault of University of Victoria), is a person-to-person shipping service that allows users to “crowd-source” deliveries—like those made on UsedVictoria or Kijiji—from the community. Second place and third place in each category received \$750 and \$500 respectively.

Students were asked to come up with creative solutions for issues related to Greater Victoria’s challenges in transportation, housing, human health, environmental health, and economic resiliency. The Future Innovator Challenge received more than 70 submissions, with the six finalists invited to pitch their projects to a panel of judges at a public event at University of Victoria. Because there were so many high-caliber submissions, semi-finalists were invited to display their projects in a public idea gallery at Sunday’s event.

“The passion and creativity our region’s young people have for wanting to make our community a better place is inspiring. We were blown away by all the innovative student ideas and the quality of the finalist pitches. We live in a community that deeply values innovation, and it fills you with hope to see the bright ideas of the next generation of leaders,” said Emilie de Rosenroll, CEO of SIPP.

Bryan Mavrow, Chief Business Innovation Officer at First West Credit Union was equally impressed with the caliber of the submissions this year. “Having served as a judge for the Open Innovation Challenge last year, I was thrilled to once again be a part of the judging committee for this year’s competition on behalf of First West Credit Union. From the workshop we held in December to this past weekend’s presentation, it was amazing to see how well the students absorbed all the feedback we provided and elevated their final pitches in this short period of time. Their passion for positive change, and their ingenuity to create original solutions that are workable and will make a valuable difference in our communities, is very inspiring.”

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Media Contact

Taryn Malcolm
Marketing & Communications Specialist
tmalcolm@southislandprosperity.ca
(778) 676-9755

OR

Bruce Williams
Director of Engagement
bwilliams@southislandprosperity.ca
(250) 216-8225

ABOUT SOUTH ISLAND PROSPERITY PROJECT

The South Island Prosperity Project (SIPP) is the economic development organization for Greater Victoria, B.C., comprised of 49 members, including 10 local governments, five First Nations, three post-secondary institutions, seven industry associations and non-profits, and 23s major employers, all working together to bolster our region’s economic and social prosperity. This will happen by catalyzing the creation of high-quality, household-sustaining jobs, so that more families can afford to live, work and build a life here.

SIPP’s mission is to facilitate and promote the development of a strong, regionally diversified economy on South Vancouver Island. www.southislandprosperity.ca.

ABOUT ISLAND SAVINGS

Island Savings is a member-owned financial co-operative, providing banking, investment and insurance services for residents and businesses throughout Vancouver Island and the Southern Gulf Islands. As a division of First West Credit Union, B.C.'s third-largest credit union with \$10 billion in assets, 250,000 members, 53 branches and 38 insurance offices throughout the province, Island Savings brings innovative products, an extensive branch network and local decision making to the banking experience. Island Savings has a strong commitment to seeing local economies grow and thrive and in 2017, they invested \$250,000 and 4,000 volunteer hours into more than 250 organizations. For more information, visit www.islandsavings.ca.