

# ABC helps AHS students get business ideas off the ground

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Four groups of students from Acton High School have become young entrepreneurs thanks to the assistance from Acton Business Company.

On Feb. 16, Virginia Houston's Grade 10 Acton Business Company (ABC) students presented their business plans to a packed house at the Acton Town Hall Centre. Each group, ranging from delicious desserts to fitness classes, received help from a panel of mentors to get their business off the ground by this summer.

First to present was Dhara Patel, whose company dips into the mouth-watering industry of cupcakes. Using fresh and local ingredients, Patel plans to bake in a commercial kitchen the night before the weekly Farmers Market, where she will sell her goods at their best.

Aside from chocolate, vanilla and

red velvet flavours, Patel will also be dishing out peaches and cream and apple pie, all with gluten-free and vegetarian options.

Next to present were Ethan Kalra and Carson van Tol of OVT Custom Guitars, whose third member, Jon O'Neill, was unable to attend. Their company focuses on building custom-made guitars out of wood and the necessary wiring.

Dylan McNair came forward to present Hydra: a comic book store that would sell products along a gaming thread, including *Dungeons and Dragons*.

McNair enjoys meeting up with his friends to talk about comics and play the card game at the Georgetown hobby store, The Hooded Goblin. But living in Acton, and not being of legal age yet to drive a car, McNair saw a need to bring a similar atmosphere to town.

Brian Secord was last to present his business plan of BFit: fitness classes for kids in an area where the age group

is currently left out.

I really wanted to make a track club that was for younger kids and was a lot closer to them to get fit and have a lot of fun at the same time, he said.

His classes, that will run three times a week, will cost \$15 per session with a discounted rate if signing up for the whole summer. The first class each kid tries is free.

On the panel of mentors was Beth Paisley, manager at the Downtown Acton BIA, Corey Wilson, a sales professional, serial entrepreneur, and landlord, Kathleen Dills, general manager of the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce, Fred Dawkins, an entrepreneur with major achievements in Acton-based manufacturing, Jamie Draves, President & CEO at Junto Business Solutions Inc. and a *Dragons Den* success story for his Quinta quinoa, and Sean Aherne, President at H.A. Sheldon Canada Ltd.

At the end of the presentations,



Brian Secord accepts \$2,000 for his business, BFit. From left, Sean Aherne, Corey Smith, Brian Secord, Kathleen Dills, Virginia Houston and Beth Paisley.

Photo by Kathryn Boyle

the awards were distributed: Secord received \$2,000, and Patel received \$1,000 for her cupcake business. The other two groups, OVT and Hydra, received a surprise \$500 to get their efforts off the ground.

In attendance was Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette, who was im-

pressed to see the dedication these Grade 10 students had to start their own business.

It shows there's a lot of entrepreneurial kids out there, he said. The kids did a marvellous job presenting. And those ideas were amazing. I'm very impressed.

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