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New Orleans Hosts Nation's Leading Business Schools to Drive Economic Impact *The Idea Village Ignites Entrepreneurial Community with IDEAcorns Challenge '09*

March 19, 2009 – New Orleans, LA – Today, The Idea Village announces plans to host 50 students from the nation's leading MBA programs, who will join forces with top corporate volunteers and the New Orleans entrepreneurial community from March 21st – 28th. Together, they will create economic impact by solving critical growth challenges facing New Orleans entrepreneurs. The *IDEAcorns Challenge '09* marks an intensive week of business consulting provided to six high-impact entrepreneurial ventures in New Orleans.

Five MBA teams will be matched by a corporate team from Salesforce.com, as well as employees from Google who will lend their Google expertise to participating entrepreneurs and will lead a blog from the inaugural *IDEAcorns Challenge* that showcases New Orleans as a hub of innovation and entrepreneurial activity.

"We are bringing the best and the brightest talent in the country to New Orleans with a short-term goal of providing high-impact solutions to New Orleans entrepreneurs, and a long-term goal of positioning New Orleans as a laboratory of innovation and entrepreneurship," says Tim Williamson, President and Co-Founder of The Idea Village. "We hope to foster a lifetime affinity for New Orleans among tomorrow's future business leaders while reinforcing our city as a strategic place to be an entrepreneur."

Participating universities in the *IDEAcorns Challenge* include:

- Booth School of Business, The University of Chicago,
- Haas School of Business, University of California Berkeley,
- Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University
- Kellstadt Graduate School of Business and DePaul University
- Stanford Graduate School of Business

"The experience gives students a chance to step out of their 'everyday selves,' a chance to realize their own true potential not only as business professionals but as active members of a community," says Stanford GSB faculty member Professor Dr. Rick Aubry, who has participated as a faculty advisor on two preceding *IDEAcorns* trips. "The Idea Village gives the students the opportunity to leverage who they are and what they've learned at Stanford to address real world challenges with real world solutions."

Ventures that will benefit from *IDEAcorns Challenge '09* include:

- **Naked Pizza** – An all-natural pizza delivery place that recently entered into an agreement with Mark Cuban, as a result of a competition that drew over 1,400 applicants nationwide. Naked Pizza is the only pizza delivery in the world that is good for you and Naked Owners and Cuban together are considering franchise models with a goal of 1,000 shops nationwide.
- **Don Kelly Productions** - Producing *project 30-90* on September 5, 2009, the first "green" music festival in Louisiana to be powered by alternative energy sources and a full slate of environmentally conscious initiatives.
- **Feelgoodz** - Recyclable and biodegradable flip-flops made from sustainably harvested natural rubber. Secured a distribution deal with Whole Foods in the South and Southwest regions.
- **Alternative Housing Support Corporation (AHSC)** - Creates, promotes and supports alternative housing models as a way to repair urban neighborhoods.
- **Sustainable Environmental Enterprises (SEE)** - Provides affordable renewable energy to New Orleans residents.
- **InSite(s)**-A housing market analysis firm which will develop a unique demand-side methodology to estimate and characterize demand for housing.



Kyle Berner, Creator and CEO of Feelgoodz remarks, “I have worked with The Idea Village team since Feelgoodz was just a crazy flip-flop idea nearly one year ago. The business strategy, network, and moral support the staff provided helped me take my budding venture to the next level. This intensive IDEAcorns experience could not come at a more opportune time as I embark on my next phase of growth with a Whole Foods distribution deal. “

The Idea Village seeks to forge a bond between the city and the IDEAcorns Challenge participants by exposing the group to the rich culture and quality of life in New Orleans, including a crawfish boil, jazz brunch, iron chef cook-off, live music with Irvin Mayfield, a night with the New Orleans Hornets and tours of the city. The IDEAcorns teams will hear from key business and political leaders on the unique opportunities available in New Orleans. Speakers include Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu; Managing Director of the New Orleans Business Council, Bob Brown; Editor-in-Chief of Entrepreneur Magazine, Amy Cosper; President of Tulane University, Scott Cowen; Chancellor of University of New Orleans, Tim Ryan and CEO of Greater New Orleans, Inc., Michael Hecht, among others. In addition, several local business leaders will open their homes for dinner with the students.

IDEAcorns Challenge '09 sponsors include: Greater New Orleans, Inc., Harrah's, Jones Walker, Hornbeck Offshore, New Orleans Hornets and Tulane Freeman School of Business. The work of The Idea Village would not be possible without the generous support of Blue Moon Fund, Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation and Tulane University.

ABOUT THE IDEA VILLAGE

In 2000, The Idea Village was formed by a group of New Orleans citizens who returned home energized by experiences in thriving communities across the United States. The founders determined that the key to creating positive economic and social change in New Orleans was to create a vibrant entrepreneurial community. The Idea Village formalized in 2002 as an independent 501(c) (3) non-profit organization with a mission to identify, support and retain entrepreneurial talent in New Orleans by providing business resources to high-impact ventures.

To date, The Idea Village has provided direct service to over 245 entrepreneurial ventures representing 935 jobs and over \$67 million in revenue. With support from more than 300 students, professionals and partners, The Idea Village has provided over 28,000 hours of business consulting and allocated over \$1.5 million in grants to local businesses.

ABOUT THE IDEA VILLAGE'S IDEAcorns PROGRAM

In July 2006, The Idea Village partnered with Tulane University to form the IDEAcorns, an experiential learning program that connects MBA students and professionals to business challenges facing high-impact entrepreneurs in New Orleans. To date, 280 students from 8 universities worldwide have provided direct resource to the New Orleans entrepreneurial community.

www.ideavillage.org

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