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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS ACADEMY STUDENTS RECEIVE INVESTMENTS AND FINALIST COMPETES AT GLOBAL SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION**

MACON – On Friday, May 4, one local student from the Macon Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) program, Katie Davis, will pitch their non-profit business idea at the YEA! Saunders Scholars Competition, which takes place at New York's Rochester Institute of Technology, for up to \$30,000 in college scholarships and business startup prizes.

The young entrepreneur is the founder of Same Stars Canvas, a non-profit that purchases handmade tote bags from a cooperative of Guatemalan women, who are paid a fair wage, sells them to socially-conscious buyers and uses the profits to donate duffel bags to children in the foster care system, who often have to carry their belongings in trash bags.

Davis was selected to represent Macon at the YEA! Saunders Scholars Competition after winning the second annual YEA! Macon Investor Panel event in April. During that event, a group of local business leaders invested over \$5,000 in 12 different businesses, created by the local middle and high school students selected to participate in YEA! Macon. The local investors represented Butler Automotive Group, Kumho Tire of Georgia, Mr. John Easter, as well as Waites & Foshee Insurance Group.

J. Blake Sullivan, who is the Sullivan Forestry Consultants President and Owner, represented Mr. John Easter and remarked: “I am so impressed with the entrepreneurs that pitched to the YEA! Investor Panel. Those twelve young adults exhibited passion, creativity and drive, as they made the case to make their dream of being an entrepreneur a reality. I had so much fun being a part of the day’s events.”

Justice Swint, CEO of Jewelry by Justice, which creates paracord bracelets with custom charms for holidays and special moments in life, and Chandler Wood, CEO of Creations by Wood, which designs and engraves personalized wooden home décor, were also selected as Investor Panel runners up.

“I continue to be overwhelmed by the level of business acumen and talent that exists amongst our students in Middle Georgia. The ideas that these young people not only come up with, but nurture and expand upon, are truly impressive,” said David A. Danzie, Jr., who is the Joshua Cabinetry President and participated as an investor for the second year, representing Butler Automotive Group.

The YEA! Macon Investor Panel Winner, Katie Davis, CEO of Same Stars Canvas, will participate in the YEA! Saunders Scholars Competition this week, which brings together over 100 young entrepreneurs, ages 11 through 18, from across the world, who have won their local YEA! Investor Panel events, to pitch their business ideas. The Competition is named for and made possible by legendary entrepreneur E. Philip Saunders, with respected business and community leaders judging the presentations and awarding thousands of dollars in college scholarships and prizes.

Davis will first compete against other young entrepreneurs from the Southeast Region on Friday, May 4, between 12:30 p.m. and 4 p.m. To see her pitch live, visit the YEA! Macon Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/yeamacon](http://www.facebook.com/yeamacon). Starting at 4:45 p.m. that day, YEA! International will live stream the final round of the Saunders Scholars Competition, so friends, family and communities across the world can share in the excitement. To view the broadcast on web browsers, visit [www.ustream.tv/channel/ritevents](http://www.ustream.tv/channel/ritevents). To view on mobile devices, download the Ustream app and search for “RIT Events.”

The Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce runs YEA! Macon, which teaches local public, private and home school students how to launch their own companies. The program is generously funded by local sponsors and supported by community partners, including Mercer University’s Stetson School of Business, as well as local volunteers.

YEA! Macon’s second year will culminate with a graduation celebration on May 22, at 6 p.m., at the Mercer Innovation Center, as well as a trade show event on June 1, from 5 to 8 p.m., at the Lamar Lofts Lobby in Downtown Macon. Both events are free and open to the community.

For more information about YEA! Macon, including a full list of sponsors, as well as future opportunities for student participants, sponsors and community volunteers, please visit: [www.maconchamber.com/young-entrepreneurs-academy.html](http://www.maconchamber.com/young-entrepreneurs-academy.html).

## **About the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce**

Established in 1861, the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce is the area's largest business services organization and primary advocate for the Macon business community. The Chamber supports the growth and development of business by offering networking and marketing opportunities, providing valuable benefits to its members, advocating for legislative issues that will promote a healthy business climate, and participating in the economic development efforts for Macon-Bibb. For more information, visit [www.maconchamber.com](http://www.maconchamber.com).

## **About the Young Entrepreneurs Academy**

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) is a 501(c)3 offering groundbreaking year-long classes that teach middle and high school students how to start and run their own businesses. Throughout the class, students develop business ideas, write business plans, conduct market research, pitch their plans to a panel of investors for startup funds, and launch and run their own, fully formed companies and social movements. The project-based program empowers students to take charge of their futures.

Founded in 2004 at the University of Rochester with support from the Kauffman Foundation, YEA! today serves thousands of students nationwide. In 2011, the United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation became a national sponsor and partner of the Academy to help celebrate the spirit of enterprise among today's youth and tomorrow's future leaders.

YEA! bridges the business and educational communities to fulfill its mission of teaching more students how to make a job, not just take a job. YEA! is made possible by the Kauffman Foundation, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and E. Philip Saunders Foundation. For more information, visit [www.yeausa.org](http://www.yeausa.org).

### **About the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation**

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation is dedicated to strengthening America's long-term competitiveness and educating the public on how the free enterprise system improves society and the economy.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations.

### **About Sam's Club**

Sam's Club®, a division of Walmart Stores, Inc. (NYSE: WMT), is a leading membership warehouse club offering savings and services to millions of members in 651 clubs in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Sam's Club offers affordable access to innovative services for families and small business owner, including travel, payroll and HR services, protection plans, legal solutions, cash rewards and more. To learn more about time and money with Sam's Club, visit [www.samsclub.com/services](http://www.samsclub.com/services).

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