



Entrepreneurship gets top grades at Loyola High

BY PAUL DELEAN, THE GAZETTE JUNE 3, 2014

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Andrew Molson, vice-chairman of the board of Molson Coors Brewing Corp., shares a sample of a dessert pizza made under the name La Sweetzeria by students, including Luca Amorosa and John Miceli, at Loyola High School on Thursday, May 29, 2014.

Photograph by: John Kenney, The Gazette

After hearing Alimentation Couche-Tard chief executive Alain Bouchard bemoan the lack of entrepreneurs and economic education in Quebec at a Board of Trade luncheon last week, Andrew Molson saw cause for optimism the very next day.

Molson, vice-chairman of the board of Molson Coors Brewing Corp. and a director of the Montreal Canadiens Hockey Club, was one of the judges for this year's "student stock exchange challenge" at Loyola High School.

As a school project in their entrepreneurship class, Secondary 5 students at Loyola had to come up with a product, create a company and raise capital through the sale of shares, market and sell their creation, then dissolve the company and distribute the proceeds, with half the profits going to charity.

Food was the product of predilection for participants, largely because of its affordability and appeal to fellow students. This year's offerings included Bacon Bad (bits of hot dog wrapped in bacon with a brown-sugar topping), La Sweetzeria (a dessert pizza covered with Nutella and fruit), A Cutlet Above (chicken cutlet sandwich) and Veal of Fortune (a panini-pressed veal cutlet sandwich).

Eighteen groups of six to 10 students participated in this year's challenge. Molson and fellow judges Cameron Fortin (a portfolio manager at Formula Growth Ltd.) and Richard Leschiutta (an account manager at Royal Bank) heard the pitches of the final four, delivered in a Dragons' Den format.

They were floored by the assurance, knowledge and imagination of the finalists.

"You listen to Alain Bouchard talk about how important it is for young people to learn about the economy, and this contest is a clear example of an institution going about educating young people on how to participate in our society with a business mind," Molson said.

"What we heard were very mature presentations from people who are still in their teens. Every one of the presentations seemed to have truly developed a concept which they thought would be unique and new for the customers of this city. That surprised me."

Said Fortin, who graduated from Loyola in 2000: "I was really impressed with all the kids. I spend my days interviewing management teams, and I forgot I was listening to a bunch of Grade 11s."

Said Leschiutta, who actually attended the selling sessions as well to get a better idea of how each team was executing: "It's just incredible to see the thought and effort that went into this, and the enthusiasm they brought. It's not just on paper. High school students create a project, sell it from A to Z. It's a great learning opportunity."

In their pitches to the judges, the Loyola students made earnings and expense projections as if their projects were ongoing, using numbers and insights gathered during three selling sessions at the school in April.

Their research included the cost of food trucks (what one company saw as the future of its product in Montreal), municipal licences, food-preparation equipment, vehicle rentals and downtown kiosks.

A Cutlet Above created a cartoon mascot ("bonhomme") for its signage and actually used a consultant (as the rules allow).

Members of the Bacon Bad team had T-shirts with their logo (inspired by the hit TV show Breaking Bad). "A big part of selling a product is getting people to the kiosk, and it helped us do that," said chief executive Daniel Tuccinardi.

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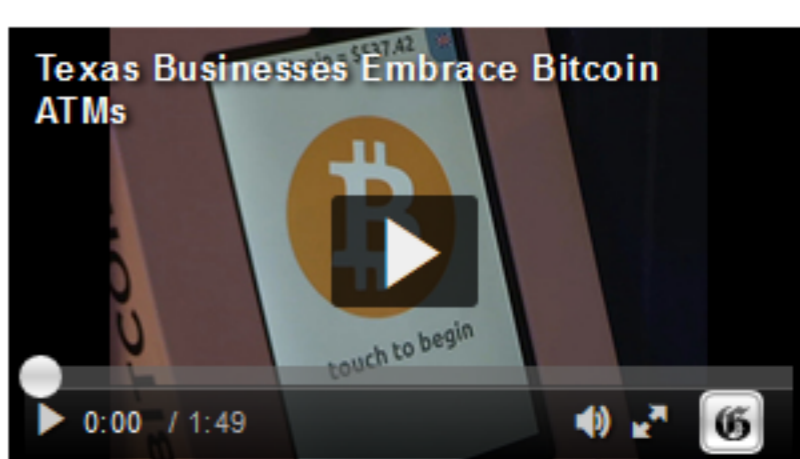
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