



**ROMEO  
COMMUNITY  
SCHOOLS**

## **GOOD NEWS ACROSS 'R' DISTRICT**

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### **Future entrepreneurs in the making**

People come to them all the time with “great ideas on a napkin,” said Paula Macpherson, Community Engagement manager for Velocity, a business incubator, accelerator and coworking space located in Sterling Heights. “But you have to figure out how to make a living from this great idea.”



***Marc Alexander, founder and CEO of Lite Raise, a social tech company that empowers students and organizations to increase their fundraising potential, served as one of the team coaches.***

This was the impetus for Velocity to host an event for students in Julia Lengemann’s entrepreneurship class at Romeo High School. The goal for the visit, according to Ms. Macpherson, was to give the students “an idea of what it’s like to be an entrepreneur; to pick the brain of someone who actually is getting up everyday and doing it.”

Participating in the morning’s session on January 25 were local area entrepreneurs or professionals who work in an entrepreneurial environment. These business people were assigned to individual

table groups, serving as coaches to guide the students through each section of a business canvas exercise while using their own personal business experience and real-world insight to help them form a solid solution.

The business canvas served as the “large napkin” on which the students could flesh out ideas on what sets them apart from their competition, what was the message of their business enterprise, how they were going to make money from their customers or raise needed funds to launch their company, and what were their distribution and marketing plans, among other key aspects of starting and growing a business.



Each table was given a specific problem to address by developing a corresponding solution. Examples included building a campus navigation app, creating an online tutoring platform, developing an app that helps high school or college students find and join study groups, and building a job portal specifically tailored for high school students featuring part-time jobs, internships and entry-level positions.

The teams worked collaboratively to demonstrate that their proposed solution was a potentially viable business capable of effectively addressing the problem.

The goal of the event, according to April Boyle, Senior Advisor for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Velocity, was to introduce entrepreneurship as a realistic option to the students while they are still young.

“I think sometimes we think entrepreneurship is too much of a pipedream and push people into things that maybe feel a little more secure,” April said. “We know that with the right support, information, resources and education, it is a very viable option as a career path and we want to give the students the tools and resources that are necessary to try it.”

April recognized that the conventional corporate world is not for everyone.

“There are lots of personalities out there that would thrive in an entrepreneurial environment that is very self-directed and self-motivated,” she said. “It’s not an easy path, but it may be a truer path for an individual. And you can change the world along the way.”

#### **COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING DEPARTMENT**