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Epsom students enter the Dragons' Den and secure Tycoon Competition success

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Four Business students at Nescot College in Epsom recently joined Peter Jones at a charity day, following their success in the national Tycoon Enterprise Competition. As part of their course, the students created a business concept and presented it Dragons' Den style to five local business leaders. Their product impressed and generated enough income to secure them third place in the national competition.

Students on the Nescot Business and Entrepreneurship course had to create a business, research the market, launch a product and try to make as many sales as possible. The winning students – Reem Abid, Johnny Connolly, Nathan Dean and Mattie Ray – created The WalkBottle, a 3 in 1, double insulated dog water bottle with two detachable bowls for food, water, or to carry treats.

Earlier in the course, a variety of local businesses supported the competition and the college by offering up 'dragons', to review each group's business idea and pitches, giving feedback on each one. Matt Thomas – CEO and Founder of Matthew Thomas Garden Design, Andi Drishi – Director and Owner at HICL Builders, Jon Skinner – CEO and Founder at Glow Homes, Lance Harris – National Sector Lead at Ministry of Justice UK and Vanessa McCormack – Hub Manager at the Epsom and Ewell Hub all gave up their time to help motivate and encourage the students as they competed not just with their coursemates, but also against groups nationwide.

Securing third place in the national Tycoon Enterprise Competition saw the team invited to the Peter Jones Foundation Charity Clay Pigeon Shoot earlier this month at the prestigious Holland & Holland Shooting Grounds. They were able to meet Peter and run a promotional stall during an afternoon showcase, to present their products, branding and entrepreneurial journey to guests.

Julie Kapsalis MBE, CEO and Principal at Nescot College said "I am so proud of our students, who pushed themselves out of their comfort zone and created a credible business, which beat hundreds of others across the country. I want to thank the Peter Jones Foundation and the local businesses who supported them by offering up their experienced, inspiring leaders to act as 'dragons' in our Nescot den. Our students learned a huge amount and could absolutely be tycoons of the future. We've provided a launchpad and I'm looking forward to seeing them fly."

Peter Jones CBE said: "My Foundation has been helping to empower young people for over 20 years. With so many challenges facing school leavers, it's more important than ever to provide young people with support to help them fulfill their potential. Charity days allow us to raise vital funds – every pound raised will support the Foundation's work to transform the lives of young people and particularly those at disadvantage, giving them the skills, confidence and opportunities to dream big and build brighter futures."

Samantha Carey, Curriculum Manager for Catering, Business and Travel at Nescot, said: "This was an incredible opportunity for our students, and I'm hugely grateful to the Peter Jones Foundation, as well as the dedicated employers who generously gave their time to support them. Experiences like this not only help students develop their confidence, skills and professionalism, but also provide valuable networking opportunities, enabling them to build connections with industry professionals and gain insight into future career pathways. Seeing our students grow in confidence and realise their potential is incredibly rewarding, and it's exactly why I chose a career in teaching."

Students on the business course can now enter the National Entrepreneur of the Year competition, also run by the Peter Jones Foundation, which allows 16 – 21-year-olds to launch or scale a business.

The Business and Entrepreneurship course hones maths skills, teamwork, communication and critical thinking. It also promotes confidence and resilience as students take on the presentations, networking and promotion.

Nescot offers a range of courses for school leavers and adults, including Motor Vehicle, Animal Care, Hair & Beauty, Computing and IT, Performing Arts, Childcare and Health & Social Care. To find out more about studying at Nescot call 020 8394 3038, visit www.nescot.ac.uk or email adviceteam@nescot.ac.uk

The WalkBottle can be bought on Ebay:https://www.ebay.co.uk/usr/thewalkbottle

NESCOT

Image: Peter Jones, Tom Kerridge and Touker Suleyman show off The Walk Bottle, alongside the student entrepreneurs

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