



PRESS RELEASE

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For more information, contact:

Jonas Macapinlac
Director of Integrated Marketing Communications
University of Guam
Tel: (671) 735-2944
Cell: (671) 787-1010
Email: jmac@triton.uog.edu

Winning team announced for Micronesia's first-ever Startup Weekend
Team to receive \$5,000 seed funding to carry out business pitch

A team of budding entrepreneurs from Pohnpei with their business pitch Drop & Drop has been announced the overall winner of this year's Startup Weekend Micronesia, a three-day entrepreneurial event associated with Google Techstars Startup Weekend. Organized by Professional Master of Business Administration students from the University of Guam School of Business and Public Administration in partnership with the Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center Network, the event was held beyond Guam and Saipan for the first time on seven total Micronesian Islands.

Drop & Drop is a delivery service for the convenience of Pohnpei residents for anything from food items to laundry. The team members included Michelle Kamber, Bernarda Mathias, Yolanda Waltu, and Yuchi Leopold. The team will come to Guam in January to receive \$5,000 in seed funding courtesy of Bank of Guam to start their business.

"As a person who used to live in the city where life is fast-paced and you can get served as long as you have a phone, moving to Pohnpei is the opposite. Door-to-door delivery doesn't exist," Kamber said. "I'm very grateful for the Startup Weekend and for all the people behind it to help us bring up our business ideas. The people of Pohnpei need delivery services to move things faster and bury the *mañana* habit."

The Micronesia-wide event, held from Nov. 7–9, had a total of 119 participants, making up 30 teams that competed for the best business idea in their event location.

"In just 54 hours, participants experienced the highs, lows, excitement, and pressure that contribute to the life of a startup," said Lone Skye Llagas, a PMBA student at the

University of Guam and program manager for the event. “The Startup Weekend Micronesia team was able to accomplish our goal for this project — to inspire and give the participants a fun and experiential environment to work on their business ideas.”

Cheery Yeban, another PMBA student and assistant program manager for the event, said the participants in the islands where this event was launched for the first time were open to learning and participating as much as possible during the event.

Each island had its own winning team, all of which received prizes from local sponsors. The winning teams were:



- Chuuk: BioVerse, a business to make eco-friendly bags out of taro and tapioca. Team members: AM Johnson, Deondre Anne Zaldivar, KM Edwin, Mark Mathew Tammad, Aliksrue Tolenna, and Kiva Rinae Meno.



- CNMI: Islander RC, a remote-control car race-track business idea by Korky Aguon.



- Guam: IslaCor, Damen Michael Borja's business startup idea for a mobile tour guide application that provides the locations of Guam's hidden gems.



- Kosrae: Carve with Heart, a business specializing in hand-carved cutting boards and utensils using mahogany and reclaimed wood. Team members: Greg George, Paliknoa Sigrah, and Srue George.



- Palau: Alii Blengur, an authentic Palauan restaurant idea by Yoslau Victor that is designed to cater to tourists while promoting the Palauan culture.



- Pohnpei: Drop & Drop, a convenient and efficient delivery service for items from food to laundry. Team members: Michelle Kamber, Bernarda Mathias, Yolanda Waltu, and Yuchi Leopold.



- Yap: 691 Mogethin Buffet, a buffet restaurant business that partners with local farmers and fishermen to offer locally sources dishes. Team members: Abigail Mongon, Arleen Tretnoff, Jaret Tailigtog, Jeshel Elab, and Beriteiti Margie Teburea.

The PMBA students who hosted Startup Weekend Micronesia and will graduate this month are Christina Thai, Nicole Mesa, Kylene Hsieh, Cheery Yeban, Erica Pangelinan, Aubreeana Taylor, Christiana Tuck, Jenna Leon Guerrero, Ione Skye Llagas, and David Kamai.

Startup Weekend events have been launched in more than 150 countries globally. The first one held in this region was in Guam in 2014, and it expanded to Saipan in 2016. This was the first year it has been offered in Palau, Chuuk, Kosrae, Yap, and Pohnpei.

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