Ford Blue Oval Scholarships Awarded to Local High School Students at 2nd Annual Founders Academy

South Side students win week-long business camp competition focused on sustainability and technology led by partnership of Ford Motor Company Fund, Chicagoland Entrepreneurial Center and the SME Education Foundation.

June 23, 2009 - PRLog -- Chicago, ILL., – High school students from Chicago’s South Side spent last week learning and experiencing entrepreneurship in science, engineering and green technology from some of the city’s most successful entrepreneurs and competed for Ford Blue Oval Scholarships at the 2nd Annual Future Founders Academy hosted by the Chicagoland Entrepreneurial Center (CEC).

The week-long “Apprentice” style summer business camp was made possible in part by a newly-formed partnership of the CEC, Ford Motor Company Fund, and the SME Education Foundation. Twenty-five students from eight Chicago Public Schools were immersed in entrepreneurship at the 2009 Future Founders Academy. The highly engaging week of programming provided a backstage pass to entrepreneurship in Chicago including thriving green-tech businesses, a leading technology corporation, emerging fashion designers, a gourmet pretzel manufacturer and much more. The Academy provided team building and individual leadership development opportunities and culminated in a business plan competition. Students gained important entrepreneurial skills including networking, sales, technology, critical thinking, financing and public speaking. The final competition resulted in four winning teams receiving Ford Blue Oval Scholarship awards totaling $35,000.

“Today’s workplace demands innovative thinking and an ability to independently create our own career path. The goal of the Future Founders Academy is to introduce students to the possibilities of an entrepreneurial career, and give them basic skills for creating a complete business plan,” said Scott Issen, Managing Director at the CEC.

“Ford Motor Company Fund is delighted to participate in an entrepreneurial program which fosters the development of real world skills in a fun learning environment,” stated Mike Schmidt, Director, Education and Community Development, Ford Motor Company Fund. “The Future Founders Academy’s focus on a positive hands-on approach to learning with an emphasis on math and science exemplifies the mission of the Ford Blue Oval Scholarships. Our participation in this Academy is one of the many ways that the financial resources of Ford Fund continue to make a difference in the lives of the South Side community that Ford has been a part of for over 100 years. We are committed to empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs with the resources that provide them and the community with hope for a brighter future,” Schmidt added.

Working with the Ford Motor Company Fund, the CEC developed curriculum based on sustainability, centered on a trip to the SMART HOME: Green and Wired exhibit now on display at Chicago’s Museum of Science and Industry. The student entrepreneurs toured the SMART HOME exhibit selecting and researching one of its featured innovative green products. The students then developed an advanced business plan focused on sustainability, marketing of the product, technology and finances.

On June 19, student teams faced their final competition-- vying for Ford Blue Oval Scholarships – with the presentation of their product’s business case to a panel of judges from the entrepreneurial community, Ford Motor Company, and the SME Education Foundation, among others.
Ford Blue Oval Scholarship criteria requires that a student is interested in pursuing a Science, Technology, Engineering or Manufacturing-related career and plans to pursue a college degree. Scholarship dollars will be administered by the SME Education Foundation and be distributed through the student’s school’s Financial Aid Office.

The Blue Oval Scholarship 2009 Winners:

FIRST PLACE - $4,667 SCHOLARSHIPS EACH: Mia Bridges, Graduate, Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy; Zoe Damacela, incoming senior, Whitney Young High School, and Brandon Tucker, incoming senior, Global Visions Academy.

SECOND PLACE - $3,500 SCHOLARSHIPS EACH: Sean Coleman, incoming senior, Chicago Vocational Career Academy; Lucia Gonzalez, incoming senior, Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy, and Devante Perry, incoming senior, Global Visions Academy.

THIRD PLACE - $2,333 SCHOLARSHIPS EACH: Devin King, Graduate, ACE Technical Charter High School; Mia Lee, Graduate, Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy, and John Nash, incoming senior, George Washington High School.

FOURTH PLACE - $1,166 SCHOLARSHIPS EACH: Corey Barksdale, Graduate, Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy; Jessalyn Lofton, incoming senior, Global Visions Academy, and Ezequiel Negrete, Graduate, Edwin G. Foreman High School.

Future Founders Academy:
The 2009 Future Founders Academy is a continuation of the Chicagoland Entrepreneurial Center’s Future Founders program that promotes entrepreneurship in partnership with the Chicago Public Schools on Chicago’s South Side. During the past nine months, 110 students from four Chicago Public high schools have received insight on creating and running businesses of their own.

In addition to the Ford Motor Company Fund, the Future Founders Academy is made possible by the Motorola Foundation, AT&T, Harris N.A., Smart Bet Charity and in partnership with the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship and the Chicagoland Entrepreneurial Center (CEC), Global Visions Academy, Edwin G. Foreman High School, George Washington High School, the South Shore School of Entrepreneurship and Whitney Young Magnet High School.

About Ford Motor Company Fund & Community Services: Ford Motor Company Fund & Community Services is committed to creating opportunities that promote corporate citizenship, philanthropy, volunteerism and cultural diversity for those who live in the communities where Ford operates.

About Chicagoland Entrepreneurial Center (CEC): The Chicagoland Entrepreneurial Center (CEC) works at the intersection of business success and civic engagement. It identifies the region’s most promising entrepreneurs and helps them build high-growth, sustainable businesses that serve as platforms for economic development and civic leadership for the Chicagoland area. The Chicagoland Entrepreneurial is an affiliate of the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce. To learn more visit www.chicagolandec.org and www.futurefounders.com.

About the SME Education Foundation: The SME Education Foundation is committed to inspiring, supporting and preparing the next generation of manufacturing engineers and technologists in the
advancement of manufacturing education. Created by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers in 1979, the SME Education Foundation has provided more than $29 million since 1980 in grants, scholarships and awards through its partnerships with corporations, organizations, foundations, and individual donors. Visit the SME Education Foundation at www.smeef.org and award-winning website, Manufacturing is Cool!

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