

Marketplace successful

Written by Holyoke Enterprise
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Initiative, imagination and inspiration describe the 16 budding young business owners who sold handmade, homegrown products this past Saturday, Nov. 26.

Entrepreneurs hail from seven rural communities throughout northeastern Colorado, bringing a unique shopping experience for all ages at the first annual Rural Young Entrepreneurs Marketplace at AmeriTowne in Wray.

Saturday was the culmination of a year of learning about developing a business, generating business ideas and becoming “owners” of business products.

The marketplace buzzed with busy shoppers enjoying a variety of shopping opportunities as products ranged from colorful origami wallets to handcrafted jewelry, hats and bags, embellished picture frames and more.

Taste buds were tempted with home baked goodies, chicken soup, jerky, plus home grown pork sausage and brats; all created and sold by young business owners ages 10-19. A total of 551 products were sold from 15 business booths with sales totaling over \$3,500. This year-long opportunity for rural youth was possible through a partnership with the El Pomar Foundation, Northeast Regional Council.

Each year Rural Young Americans Center offers the Young Entrepreneur Tool Kit classes and workshops. This kit includes eight basic business entrepreneur lessons ranging from market research and competition, to pricing, sales and promotion, to hiring employees. All are designed to prepare youth ages 10 and older, to be successful business owners.

The marketplace provides a venue for entrepreneurs to advertise and sell their products and services. In addition, entrepreneurs are eligible to apply to the Young Americans Celebration for Young Entrepreneurs business competition in Denver. There are four age categories, and panels of independent judges select a winner from each age category and up to two finalists in each category.

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Winners receive \$1,000 and are paired with a successful adult business owner in the Denver area. Finalists receive \$250. The opportunities are endless for young entrepreneurs who are willing to work hard to grow their businesses.

Rural Young Americans Center is committed to developing economic education for rural youth, through hands-on programs and real-life experiences that complement and reinforce each other to build life skills, work skills and financial self-sufficiency.

For more information about 2012 Young Entrepreneur Tool Kit classes or any programs of Rural Young Americans visit www.yacenter.org or call 970-332-3150.

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