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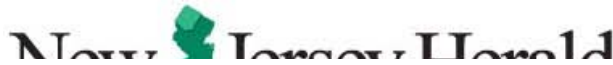
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Newton students learn from marketplace

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By GREG WATRY
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NEWTON – What does it take to be an entrepreneur? Ask students at Merriam Avenue School and Halsted Middle School and you may just get insider tips for starting a successful business venture.

On Friday, Newton students involved with the after-school program Project Launch Newton held their first holiday marketplace at both the Merriam Avenue and Halsted Middle schools. The marketplace is the final, culminating facet of TREPS, which is slang for "teenage entrepreneurs." The TREPS curriculum aims to teach students about the challenges of running a business. And at the marketplace the students finally had a chance to sell their products to the public.

At Merriam Avenue, students advertised their wares, which consisted of original paintings, baked items, decorated pinecones and ornaments, tie-dyed shirts, clay pottery and much more.

Tyler Zummo, 11, said, "I learned that it takes a lot of hard work to start a business."

Zummo sold what he called "reindeer on a stick." The homemade product consisted of a chocolate covered marshmallow on a stick, with pretzels for the antlers. Zummo was selling his reindeer for \$1.

The students "have created a business plan, they've manufactured all their products, and obviously learned about advertising and marketing," said Haley McCracken, a community health educator for Project Self-Sufficiency, which jointly runs Project Launch Newton with the Newton School District.

Preparations for the marketplace started in October. Students studied business terminology and created their own business plans.

"It's really fun and you get to keep your money, that's the good part," Zummo added,

According to Project Launch Newton's program director Shannon Gill Williams, the students learned about loans as well.

"In order to have a product to sell, they have to purchase the materials," she said. If the students wanted, "they were given a loan to kind of jump start their business."

Some took "a loan from the Project Launch Bank, or from their parents," McCracken said.

"They have to pay the loan back, and all the extra money will be theirs," Williams said.

Mason Headley, a sixth grader at Halsted, said what he enjoyed most was the production part of the process.

His creation: a base layer of graham cracker with fudge in the middle, and topped with crispy, golden brown marshmallows for \$1.

"I thought of s'mores and then I thought of fudge," he said. "So I thought why not put them together?"

Headley showcased further signs of efficiency as well. In an effort to maximize his profits, he took the excess



Kiara Sosa showcases her homemade ornaments at the holiday marketplace at Merriam Avenue School.

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marshmallows, bagged them up and was selling them for 25 cents.

"I think it's really great for the kids to see what goes in to starting a business, but also to give the kids a little motivation for themselves," Williams said.

Prior to the after-school market, the students held a marketplace during the day for their fellow students.

Williams noted that some of their peers were trying to bargain with them.

But that was part of the process, said Judy Harland a site supervisor with Project Launch Newton. If some of the prices are too expensive, then the students learn they have to lower their prices or offer deals to make the sale.

"It's all real world," she said.

According to Williams approximately 32 of the roughly 45 students regularly involved in Project Launch Newton took part in the TREPS marketplace at Halsted.

At Merriam, more than 60 students participated in the marketplace.

Project Launch Newton is a new extended learning program that is offered to Merriam Avenue and Halsted Middle School students in grades 4-8. The free program began on Oct. 1, and was made possible by a grant of \$425,000 annually, for four years, from the New Jersey Department of Education.

On top of assistance with homework, the program offers a variety of creative activities, such as the STEM City, which aims to simulate real life society by assigning students specific jobs, and having them maintain the peace and solve community problems. Physical activities and physical education are also part of the multi-faceted program.

The enrichment program is offered 2:30-5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For more information call Project Self-Sufficiency at 973-940-3500 or visit the program's website: www.projectlaunchnewton.com.

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maureen
2 hours ago



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It was wonderful. It is a great lesson for the children to realize that having your own business means hard work and dedication and then you see your profits. I hope all did a cost and then net income so they could see their efforts paid off. A great learning experience.

kim
8 hours ago



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i think its great! good luck to all the kids

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