

# Young entrepreneurs take business plan on the road to New York

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The hits just keep on coming for a group of Saratoga teens who won a business plan development contest last summer and who now are headed to New York to reprise their success.

Alex Sturge, Gabe Guido and Matt Cresci will attend the World Innovation Forum, which will be held in the Big Apple on May 5 and 6.

One of the people they will meet there is Padmasree Warrior, Cisco System's chief technology officer. She is also being considered for the job of the nation's first-ever chief technology officer in the Obama administration.

The teens' initial success came at Camp BizSmart, a business and entrepreneurship academy founded by Los Gatos residents Peggy and Mike Gibbs.

At Camp BizSmart, kids develop a business and marketing plan for a real company.

"We form the kids into teams based on their company preference, skills and learning style," Mike Gibbs said. "Then the company founders come in and give them a problem that they have to solve."

The Saratoga teens chose Wateroos, a company that makes natural drinks for youngsters. Their mission was to develop a plan for Wateroos to move into the "tween" market.

"They actually have to go through the mindset of will their idea succeed," Peggy Gibbs said. "Can they make enough money to develop, produce, market and meet a payroll?"

Matt, Alex and Gabe are now sophomores at Saratoga High School.

"It was a lot of hard work and took a lot of planning," Gabe said. "We had

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different roles. I was the CTO."

Matt was the Waterroos CEO and Alex served as marketing director.

"We redesigned the juice box to make it more age-appropriate," Alex said.

"We tried the original juice and thought it needed more flavor," Matt said. "The original flavor is apple, so we came up with berry-mango, strawberry-kiwi, lemon-lime and grapefruit blaster."

Gabe added, "Then we did different sketches of boxes for the different flavors."

The boys said the camp was a lot of fun. "We had different people come in each day and talk about their success," Alex said.

One day a Brazilian samba band performed to demonstrate and talk about teamwork.

Their initial winning presentation was made before a panel of venture capitalists at Microsoft's campus in Mountain View.

Now the teens are just a bit nervous about presenting at the World Innovation Forum.

"We'll have to freshen up for the New York gig," Gabe said.

"I'll be sweating," Matt added.

Alex is excited because of the prestige involved. "I just jumped up in the air when we found out," he said.

Matt did a somersault.

Based on the success of last summer's academy, the Gibbs plan to expand the number of teams for this summer's camp, which means there are 56 openings locally.

The Aug. 3-14 academy will be at Santa Clara University. This highly innovative business academy fills up quickly, therefore interested parents and students are encouraged to sign up as soon as possible.

"This year we'll also have a virtual component," Mike Gibbs said. "Most of the documents and business plans will be online."

So far, the couple has lined up one company to challenge the Camp BizSmart class of 2009. It's Santa Clara-based Valence Energy, a start-up that says its technology can reduce customer's power bills and lower their environmental footprint.

Companies and students interested in joining Camp BizSmart should visit [www.campbizsmart.org](http://www.campbizsmart.org).